Commentary

VOLUME NINETY THREE • NUMBER FOUR • APRIL 1992

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Angelo M. Codevilla

Yeltsin and Us
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A Map of Modern Art
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Timothy Maguire

Books in Review:
Mark Falcoff / Hyam Maccoby / Gilbert Meilaender
Stephen Schwartz / Joseph Adelson

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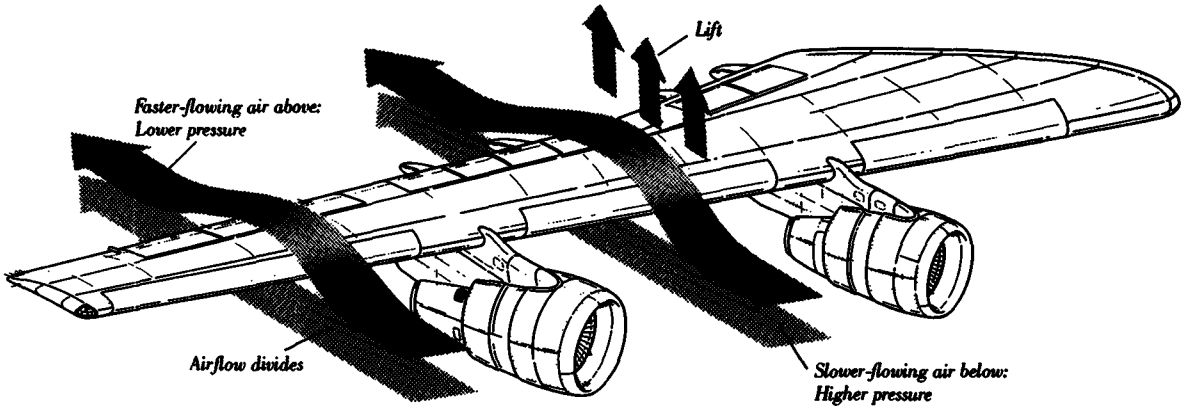

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Commentary

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COMMENTARY (ISSN 0010-2601) is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee—Single copy is $3.75, $39 a year; 2 years $72, 3 years $105—Add $8.00 per year for all foreign subscriptions, including Canada and Latin America—Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to COMMENTARY, 165 East 56th Street, New York, N.Y. 10022.
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Letters from Readers

Public Television

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The article on the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) by David Horowitz, "The Politics of Public Television" [December 1991], is dismaying. I am alarmed that COMMENTARY would publish anything so blindly doctrinaire and propagandistic.

Mr. Horowitz berates PBS's "centralized control" of public television. What he does not say is that the big donors want PBS as a clearing house so they do not have to assess the capabilities of every East Overshoe station in making scattered grants. He does not say that PBS is a "fruit basket": the individual stations review PBS offerings annually and "vote" by bidding on programs they want. Local managers are as ratings-conscious as the commercial stations (unfortunately) and except for a mistaken obligation to run some fringe offbeat items, they determine what PBS will produce. It is not the best system, but the locals rely on WNET (in New York) and WGBH (in Boston) who have the staff and facilities for major efforts. WPTV here in Miami, as an example of Mr. Horowitz's oversight, produces a national business report daily and several Spanish public TV programs for the network. . . .

Mr. Horowitz is wrong about the Ford Foundation's involvement in Washington TV news for public TV. It is true that Nixon saw Sander Vanocur, who was on the Ford Foundation's Washington news staff, as an enemy and started, or somebody did, a vendetta to get rid of him. I was serving at that time on the board of the National Public Affairs Center for TV (NPACT) which had been set up, largely at Ford's insistence, to provide a sort of super-selection committee for programming. Also on the board and chairman at the time of WETA-TV (Washington's local public-TV station) was Max Kampelman, . . . who was later Reagan's chief representative to the disarmament talks. Fred Friendly was the Ford liaison with NPACT. The White House and others raised hell because Vanocur was getting $80,000 a year—a big salary then, but nowhere comparable to that of the commercial-network anchors. Maybe this was a cover for concern about his philosophy, but that did not occur to me at the time, or to him. . . .

After about a year of service on my part, . . . Friendly started pressuring NPACT to move its major news service from Washington's WETA to New York's WNET. Apparently, Friendly was bowing to administration (Corporation for Public Broadcasting) pressure to get news out from under the Washington "liberals," although they never seemed very liberal to me: they were professional news folks as far as I could see and their efforts at impartial coverage are probably what ticked off Nixon and his buddies, . . . who were the ones who wanted public TV to sell undiluted anti-Communism. As with Bush, Nixon covered his domestic problems with anti-Soviet yak and foreign-relations work.

Anyway, NPACT caved in: its board became the board of WETA, a meaningless assignment. That is when I quit. . . . The major news job went to WNET which never after that did anything but *MacNeil/Lehrer.* NPACT shortly thereafter folded because CPB said it had nothing to do, which was right. So the "liberals" were dispatched from public TV, which means I don't know what Mr. Horowitz is talking about. . . .

Mr. Horowitz goes from Philip Agee, whose influence as an "adviser" on one program is not clearly shown, to charging that opposing terrorism and our involvement with Iran-*contra* is somehow pro-Red. "A one-sided view of the Iran-*contra* affair as an unconstitutional plot," is how Mr. Horowitz describes it. Well, it *was* unconstitutional, the CIA exceeded its authority, and screwed up. . . .

In retrospect, also, I find it hard to blame anyone for opposing our own policies in Central America when we stood firmly behind a bunch of dictators who were oppressing their people and making fortunes for themselves off U.S. aid money. Who was not happy to see Somoza fall, for instance? Even Republicans half-hoped Castro would turn out all right because Batista was such a bastard. . . .

I don't know of any "liberal-Left" conspiracy or even network; I just think the so-called conservatives are not very creative. If they had any sense they would have a better platform than mere excoriation of these unidentified liberals.

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Who are they? What issues identify them as liberal? Mr. Horowitz's contemporary "liberals" happen to be largely Democrats. Congress obviously doesn't think they are subversive. I don't think so, either, but I wish they could be better journalists and editors. . . .

Mr. Horowitz's very language is propagandistic in tone and construction and his sweeping generalities such as "if left-wing politics is PBS's ill-conceived solution to . . . its financial unease, etc." are ridiculous. Nobody with any sense, even if so-called left-wing, would think for a New York minute that "radical" politics would solve a financial crisis. . . .

SYLVAN MEYER
Miami Beach, Florida

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . David Horowitz "has it in" for PBS which, according to him, can do nothing right; moreover, because it receives public funding, it is *ipso facto* worthless. It may surprise Mr. Horowitz to hear that the publicly-funded Canadian national radio and television network, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, surpasses the comparable commercial enterprises in every aspect. . . .

What Mr. Horowitz neglects to tell your readers is that PBS covers a wide variety of good programs, not just the few which he has singled out for criticism. . . .

Living in Toronto, we receive WNED television out of Buffalo, on Channel 17, a PBS station. I cannot remember the names of all the excellent programs to which we have been treated by that station, but some do come to mind: the story of the creation and development of the H-bomb; the wonderful array of British comedies and satires; . . . the nature programs; the Rumpole series (British); *Mystery Theater* (British); discussions of political affairs by the *McLaughlin Group* and *Inside Washington*; opera, symphony, etc. . . .

If PBS sees fit to program left-wing stories, that is its prerogative. Personally, I do not relish or care for such programs. As for the attack on Bill Moyers, that is not justified at all, since he is one of the brightest and most intelligent interviewers on television. . . .

When we consider the junk, drivel, and pap dished up by the major television networks in the U.S., we should be grateful that PBS does not stoop to such low levels, whatever the politics which it is pushing. . . .

[Judge] H. W. SILVERMAN
Ontario Court of Justice
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Horowitz's article is a refreshing discussion of the Public Broadcasting System's unrelenting advocacy of left-wing politics. However, nowhere in Mr. Horowitz's article does he discuss PBS's coverage of environmental issues. . . .

Take as an example public television's coverage of global warming. Last year PBS chose to air *After the Warming*, a 106-minute "documentary" of environmental history to the year 2050, at which point global environmental catastrophe is finally averted through the imposition of a planetwide government that controls every aspect of human life. This fantastic scenario is complete with massive planetary destruction from hurricanes and floods to famines and

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droughts, and even includes a "series of nuclear accidents" in the year 2008. . . . But nowhere is there any discussion by scientists of the probability of such a scenario.

While PBS distributed *After the Warming* to all of its member stations, and Maryland Public Television (MPT), the show's producer, is sending it to thousands of elementary schools nationwide, PBS rejected another program that discusses global warming, the award-winning British documentary, *The Greenhouse Conspiracy*. Unlike *After the Warming*, this documentary includes extensive interviews with scientific experts representing all sides of the global-warming debate, before reaching its conclusion that there is no impending catastrophe. While London's *Financial Times* declared *The Greenhouse Conspiracy* to be "quite possibly the best of the year," PBS found it "too one-sided."

In response to criticism of PBS's lack of balance in coverage of global warming, MPT added a seven-minute debate between two experts on the possibility of a greenhouse effect and its potential implications. Additionally, a half-hour debate segment was offered to PBS stations when *After the Warming* was redistributed in 1991. Unfortunately, 37 minutes of debate hardly equal almost two hours of pure propaganda. . . .

Until some reason and ideological balance are returned to the realm of public television, I am thankful that there are people like David Horowitz who will do their best to keep PBS in line through careful documentation of its abuses.

JONATHAN H. ADLER
Competitive Enterprise Institute
Washington, D.C.

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Horowitz's analysis of PBS is as disturbing as it is insightful. Your readers will want to know that *The Africans* is not the only case of a PBS propaganda piece to reach into America's classrooms. In May 1988, WETA distributed to some 40,000 schools across the country free copies of a curriculum guide on the Arab-Israeli conflict, *Arab and Jew: Wounded Spirits in a Promised Land*, made to accompany PBS's film based on David Shipler's book by that same name. The booklet is an artful piece of anti-Israel propaganda. In it, students can learn that before the advent of Zionism, Arabs and Jews lived in relative harmony; that Arabs and Jews are equally guilty of terrorism; and that the PLO has accepted a two-state solution and renounced terrorism. The most pernicious lesson imparted by this publicly-funded school book, however, is that the Israelis are racists.

According to Shipler, "mutual stereotypes" are the true barriers to peace. The PBS guide employs this seemingly balanced innocuous oversimplification to explain the Arabs and defame the Jews. In the guide's "psychological approach," Arab resentment of Jews is explained as stemming from "the political-military conflict," Jewish domination of the Arab population, and the class structure in Israel in which Arabs do the menial work. . . .

On the other hand, Jewish feeling about Arabs, according to Shipler, is simply racist:

> In Jewish eyes, the Arab is dirty, lazy, thieving, incompetent, and . . . *uppity*. . . . He appears almost as another species, marching to the beat of some primordial drum. . . . He is backward, uncivilized, and a man of animal vengeance and crude desires, of violent creed and wily action. Much of the discourse in Israel . . . contains an assumption that Arabs are unpleasant to the senses, impure as elements in the Jewish state.

Employing the classical terms of American racism, the guide casts the Israelis in the position of American whites and Palestinians in the role of American blacks. If any student misses this key point, Question 12 hammers it home: "What are some of the patterns of prejudice and discrimination between Jews and Arabs that exist between groups in other countries, including blacks and whites in the United States?" . . .

PBS seems to be teaching black children that in the very same way that the Klan hates them, Jews hate Arabs. . . . If anti-Semitism is a light sleeper, then PBS has placed alarm clocks in 40,000 American schools. . . .

CHARLES JACOBS
Newton, Massachusetts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

David Horowitz's account of the distorting effect of doctrinaire ideology on PBS is consistent with the concerns of the Committee for Accuracy in Middle East Reporting in America (CAMERA) regarding PBS coverage of Israel and the Arab world. In particular, PBS documentaries have suffered from an anti-Israel slant. . . .

But in considering the uses made of taxpayer funds disbursed through the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), it is worth noting that in the area of Middle East coverage, National Public Radio (NPR) is the network which strays most flamboyantly from its congressionally-defined mandate of "strict adherence to objectivity and balance in all programs or series of programs of a controversial nature."

While the weekly listening audience of thirteen million may seem scant compared to the vast numbers tuning in to commercial television, the listeners are an influential group. NPR describes them as upscale, America's decision-makers, the people who write to Congress and to corporations, and who run their communities. . . . Financially, the network relies on CPB money received via local affiliates and on support from private institutions. . . .

Unfortunately, NPR's array of guests, its news commentary, even its "artistic" segments, are strikingly skewed in their treatment of Israel. . . .

Perhaps the most dangerous aspect of NPR's misrepresentation of Middle East reality is its exclusion of Israel's mainstream voice. Israel's Left and ultra-Left are most heavily represented and, as ostensible balance, the far Right is sometimes heard from. The moderate, centrist majority, however, is effectively censored. Examples of the practice abound. On July 21, 1991, NPR interviewed Ari Shavit, a far-Left Israeli journalist who compared Israeli military detention prisons to Nazi concentration camps. His extreme and false commentary was unrebutted. (It should be noted that on that same day NPR also ran a second, "arts" segment, in which Israelis were compared to Nazis.)

Again, on September 6, 1991, the network carried another of its numerous segments on conditions in Israeli military prisons. Three Israelis bitterly censured their government, but no response whatever was included from government officials or other experts. Not a word was spoken reminding listeners of the victims, both Arab

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and Jewish, of the imprisoned. The inescapable message is that Israel needlessly, wantonly, and unfairly rounds up and confines innocent people. . . .

During the Gulf War, hours of special programming were added to cover the crisis, but, again, many of NPR's stable of experts were known adversaries of Israel who invariably steered the discussion away from Iraq and Kuwait to attacks on Israel. . . . One commentator, Eqbal Ahmad, even blamed Iraq's invasion of Kuwait on the Camp David accords!

Perhaps the most significant consequence of NPR's exclusion of centrist Israeli opinion is that Israel's security concerns, the main issue for the vast majority of Israelis in their confrontation with the Arabs, are given virtually no airing and allowed no legitimacy on the network. . . .

What are citizens to do when their tax dollars are used to fuel the spread of distorted information? As David Horowitz has noted, no system of accountability exists. Asked in writing to provide CAMERA with a list of speakers appearing on NPR's three major news programs over the last two years, NPR president Douglas Bennet has simply not responded, and no legal statute requires that he comply with such a public request. . . . NPR's posture has been not to examine the substance of the complaints or to meet with representatives of CAMERA, as the organization has formally requested, but to stonewall the letter-writers and to disparage the concerns expressed. Interestingly, CAMERA's many encounters with commercial media, including newspapers, magazines, and television, have met with greater openness. . . . Indeed, individuals in public television have also been more responsive to CAMERA's concerns about Middle East coverage than has National Public Radio.

ANDREA LEVIN
CAMERA
Boston, Massachusetts

DAVID HOROWITZ writes:

Sylvan Meyer is better at name-calling than he is at argument. That Miami's WPTV produces *Business Report* hardly makes public broadcasting a decentralized system. The fact remains that almost all the national PBS shows are produced by seven of the 340-odd public-television stations, because that is the way the Ford Foundation set up the system in the first place. My account of Ford's role in Washington TV news is not really challenged by Mr. Meyer's confused remarks, although he does add the interesting information that Washington's WETA, one of the system's premier producing stations, was also a creature of the Ford Foundation.

Like most of the bureaucrats who run public television, Mr. Meyer is under the impression that his partisan views (anti-Nixon, anti-Bush, and generally dismissive of the Soviet threat) are "impartial" and "balanced," while those who disagree with them are biased. A clearer picture of what is wrong with the mentality of public-television executives would be hard to imagine.

Philip Agee was not only the principal adviser to the producers of the three-hour PBS series *On Company Business*, his book was the basis for the series. Moreover, the producers who came to me for advice in my days as a Berkeley radical fully shared Agee's anti-American, pro-Communist politics.

Like Bill Moyers, Mr. Meyer thinks there is only one politically-correct attitude toward Iran-*contra*. Readers of COMMENTARY know better. Mr. Meyer defends PBS's pro-Sandinista, pro-Castro, pro-FMLN documentaries by arguing first that no one (not even the Sandinistas? Castro? the FMLN?) could be blamed for opposing our policies in Central America and, second, that even Republicans hoped Castro might not turn out to be as bad as he did. The problem with the second argument is that the PBS documentaries appeared in the 1980's, not in the 1960's. The problem with the first argument should be self-evident.

Finally, Mr. Meyer—again typically for members of the public-broadcasting community—is perverse in his refusal to understand the central issue. He asks who the liberals are who dominate public television and answers: Democrats. Then he says, quite irrelevantly, "Congress obviously doesn't think they are subversive. I don't think so, either. . . . " So what? The problem that confronts us has nothing to do with whether public televi-

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sion airs "subversive" programs (now there's an antique word). The problem is that public television by law is not supposed to be an arm of the Democratic party or to reflect its views (liberal, radical, or whatever) in a one-sided or exclusive manner. The Public Broadcasting Act of 1967 unequivocally states that programming funded by the American taxpayer should be strictly "balanced," and thus the total impact of public programming should be nonpartisan. This is a simple and sensible idea, basic to the healthy functioning of a democracy. Why can't liberals like Sylvan Meyer understand this?

H.W. Silverman has difficulty reading texts also. I never said PBS "can do nothing right." In fact, I singled out *MacNeil/Lehrer* as a news program which often does get it right by respecting the principles of fairness and balance. Judge Silverman also strikes the liberal pose: "If PBS sees fit to program left-wing stories, that is its prerogative." Well of course. And who said it wasn't? What is not its prerogative is to program left-wing stories in a one-sided manner, which is a violation of PBS's enabling legislation.

I agree with Jonathan Adler that PBS's one-sided environmental programming is a disservice to the community, and that my article would have been more complete if I had discussed this. I welcome his letter as well as that of Charles Jacobs as an addendum to what I wrote.

The same goes for Andrea Levin's letter. National Public Radio is even more egregious than public television in its contempt for the Public Broadcasting Act.

Latin American Jews

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I read Judith Laikin Elkin's article, "A Gallery of Former Jews" [December 1991], with great interest. I was born and spent my childhood in Bolivia, where my father, desperate to leave Poland, volunteered to serve in the army. He became a high-ranking officer, and served in the Chaco war, for which he was rewarded with Bolivian citizenship.

I cannot agree with the author's assertion that Latin American societies are "freighted with hostility toward the Jews." My own family's experience, the testimony of hundreds of their friends, and the history of the Jews in Latin America simply do not bear this out.

Bolivia and all the nations of Central and South America played a heroic role in the rescue of European Jewry by accepting thousands of Jewish refugees who had been rejected by the United States and Canada. At one time Bolivia had a population of 10,000 Jews, although the official quota, never enforced, was for 200. There was absolutely no harassment of Jews, even in countries that harbored Nazis and officially were pro-Axis. In fact, it was the Jews who made it perfectly clear that they considered Ecuador, Bolivia, Paraguay, and Uruguay temporary stations. After World War II, most Jews left these countries for the United States, Israel, or more "European" cultures in Argentina, Mexico, or Venezuela. Those who remained often sent their children abroad as soon as they were of age. None left because of systematic or church- or government-sponsored anti-Semitism. Even in Argentina, contrary to the contentions of a careerist like Jacobo Timerman, the military did not systematically single out Jews, even during the worst days of the "disappeared."...

RUTH S. KING

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In "A Gallery of Former Jews," Judith Laikin Elkin is right on target in her claim that hostility toward Jews in Latin America is vigorous. . . . However, her hopeful final paragraph, urging Latin American Jews to link up with other groups, invites comment.

It is true that democratic politics in the region are solid enough to allow Latin American Jews to gain respect by seeking alliances with groups in the U.S. and elsewhere that also have an interest in cultural pluralism. But one should not forget that democracy in the southern hemisphere has come hand-in-hand with a movement to privatize state-owned industries. While the 60's and 70's were stamped by the model of Fidel Castro's Cuba, . . . the late 80's and 90's, in reaction, have seen a glorification of capitalism personified by laissez-faire private (at times foreign) investment. This global economic development, of course, is awakening the old phantom of the Jew as wealth-driven moneylender. As a result, anti-Semitism is now part of the Left's strategy of accusing the various governments of selling their nation's soul to the United States. . . .

Another more troubling issue is that historically the Jewish communities in Latin America—perhaps because of the subtle but relentless aggression of the environment—have always lacked a spirit of self-criticism. Schools, youth organizations, and cultural institutions seldom allow examination of their collective behavior. To my knowledge there is not one Jewish publication in the whole region (I refer to Spanish, not Portuguese, publications) that offers a forum for authentic democratic self-discovery. In fact, these Jewish communities seem to be so much against understanding themselves that articles exploring their idiosyncrasies or special characteristics published far away—say, in Israel or New York—are often met with angry responses by community leaders and ostracism of the author. . . .

ILAN STAVANS

New York City

JUDITH LAIKIN ELKIN writes:

Ruth S. King's letter reinforces the point I wished to make in my article: many Latin Americans embrace individual Jews with open arms if they aren't "too Jewish"—that is, if they marry a non-Jew, join a popular movement, become farmers, or if they happen to be army officers. Every life described in my "gallery" was a product of that embrace. What does not go down well is Judaism, a public Jewish presence that might challenge the monolithic Catholic values which, however breached, continue to serve as national ideals and validation.

Confining ourselves to Bolivia, the country with which Miss King is most familiar, in May 1940, at the height of demand for immigration, the government prohibited the issuance of visas to persons of Semitic origin. It is true that some 10,000 Jews entered Bolivia anyway, but that is because Bolivian consuls stationed in Europe were doing a land-office business selling visas to those who could afford to pay. Two years later, the Bolivian congress debated an immigration bill intended to exclude Jews, blacks, and Orientals from the country. One wonders why, if life was so good in Bolivia, the Jews chose to leave when they were able?

Contrary to Mrs. King's impres-

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sion, Central and South American nations played only a small role in rescuing European Jews; rather, they followed the lead of the United States in closing their doors against Jews at the crucial moment (with Ecuador being the honorable exception). The dictator Trujillo also enabled a handful of Jews to settle as farmers in the Dominican Republic, apparently in order to retrieve his reputation with the world press after having massacred several thousand Haitians. An account by the Israeli historian Haim Avni of diplomatic efforts to get Latin American nations to accept Jewish refugees may be found in *The Jewish Presence in Latin America* (Judith Laikin Elkin and Gilbert W. Merkx, eds., Allen & Unwin, 1987). It is not an edifying story.

We can only rejoice that Ruth S. King's family found safe haven in Bolivia. "Who saves one life, saves the entire world." Unfortunately, this was not the experience of many thousands of others who might have contributed their talents to the New World had they been allowed in.

Ilan Stavans misreads my meaning. I believe that Latin American Jews must seek alliances with other groups *within their own countries* that share their interest in developing pluralistic societies. Reliance on the Jews of the United States would not further this interest and would probably harm it. As for the absence of self-criticism, he is right on target. One of the chief causes of the delusory nature of politics in Argentina is the unwillingness of its people, Jews included, to analyze their own history objectively.

AIDS Statistics

To the Editor of Commentary:

Michael Fumento's diatribe against what he terms the "AIDS establishment" smacks of elitism ["AIDS So Far," December 1991]. In support of his assertion that the AIDS epidemic has been overblown, he says, "A mere 727 [as of August 1991] whites, middle-class or otherwise, are listed as having gotten the disease through heterosexual contact—less than one-half of 1 percent of the total caseload."

The message implied by Mr. Fumento's article is that 200,000 cases of a fatal, sexually-transmitted, incurable viral disease is not an epidemic worthy of attention because the majority of cases occur in marginalized individuals. I wonder if Mr. Fumento has recently visited urban hospitals such as those in Harlem and the Bronx that are overwhelmed by AIDS patients. I doubt that his attitude toward such a disabling and degrading disease would remain so callous.

He cites the fact that the actual number of AIDS cases reported through 1991 will fall short of the projected number, 270,000, as a reason for rejoicing and as an example of AIDS projections being "completely wrong." We should indeed be somewhat relieved that the numbers will fall short, but that is no cause for declaring the epidemic dead. If all HIV transmission stopped today, we still would have one million HIV-infected Americans who, barring any breakthrough treatments, will become sick and die over the next ten to fifteen years. Because the majority of those deaths will not be among the white, middle-class, heterosexual population, Mr. Fumento wants to strike up the band and declare the war against AIDS over.

How sad. And how wrong. AIDS has always been an epidemic of unequal distribution, affecting some subpopulations more severely than others. Of all the facets of the AIDS epidemic, Mr. Fumento chose to extract this one aspect and concentrate it into a toxic tirade against the "AIDS establishment." I doubt that any of the 727 whites infected through heterosexual contact he refers to will draw much comfort from his assurances, and neither will the many minority communities throughout the country being devastated by the disease.

Elizabeth M. Whelan
American Council on
Science and Health
New York City

Michael Fumento writes:

Five years ago, Elizabeth M. Whelan provided a back-cover endorsement for Gene Antonio's *The AIDS Cover-Up*, a book which suggested that AIDS could be spread

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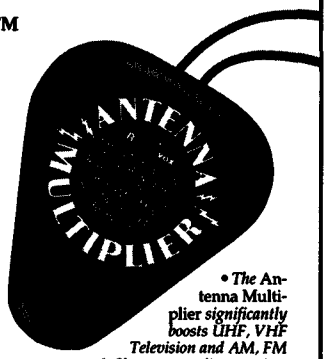

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by coughing and predicted as many as 64 million U.S. HIV infections by 1990, calling it "enlightening" and "must reading." Half a decade and 63 million non-infections later, one might think that she and the other AIDS alarmists would be at least a bit humbled by the magnitude of their error. Wrong. Instead, they ignore their role in terrorizing the nation and change their line of attack. Now they simply paint their opposition with epithets like "elitist" and "callous." No credit is given to the writer who accurately forecast the scope of the AIDS epidemic in these pages back in 1987; instead, my latest article is characterized as a "diatribe," a "tirade."

One tires of the false compassion of the AIDS establishment, which says that one AIDS death is a tragedy while a million deaths from cancer (or any other disease) are a mere statistic. I have been to AIDS hospices and have seen patients on the verge of death, but this has not changed my conviction that the AIDS establishment is wrong in continuing to fight for ever more money and attention for a disease that last year had only one-twentieth the death toll of cancer, yet which consumes far more of the federal budget than does cancer. In the many pages I have written on AIDS over the last half decade, nowhere have I suggested that the life of an AIDS patient is worth anything less than that of a victim of any other terminal disease; I have merely put forth the "radical" position that the life of an AIDS patient is worth no *more*.

I emphasized white heterosexuals only because that is the current emphasis of the media and the AIDS establishment. Let me also point out here that the statistic of 727 whites having contracted AIDS through heterosexual contact, which Dr. Whelan cites from my article, is for white *male* heterosexuals. As of the end of 1992, there were 2,513 whites (both male and female) who *claimed* to have contracted the disease through heterosexual contact (though in fact few of these cases were verified as being heterosexual in origin) out of a total of 206,392 AIDS cases. The figure of 2,513 is about the same as the number of whites in the U.S. who will be diagnosed with cancer in a single day.

Saying that AIDS is a white heterosexual disease is as accurate as saying that prostate cancer is a disease of young men or that breast cancer is a male disease. Indeed, while many people don't even know that men can get breast cancer, more white American males will contract it this year than have gotten AIDS through heterosexual sex since the epidemic began. Yet there is no "war" on male breast cancer, while the media, the U.S. Public Health Service, the broader AIDS establishment, and Dr. Whelan all still dwell relentlessly on white heterosexual AIDS. With this focus, it is they who are the true elitists.

To say that there is a pittance of white heterosexual AIDS cases does not diminish the tragedy of each one of those cases; it is meant merely to point out that a massive public-health campaign aimed at this tiny minority necessarily draws off vital and scarce resources from the suffering and needs of the great majority of victims of AIDS and other diseases.

Deconstruction

To the Editor of Commentary:

I write to protest Peter Shaw's "The Rise & Fall of Deconstruction" [December 1991]. Mr. Shaw begins his article with the commonplace observation that universities have been transformed "from places of learning to arenas of political confrontation." What is surprising, though, is that he follows the now routine neoconservative denunciation of this situation with an article that exhibits none of the virtues of disinterested scholarship that he presumably defends, and all of the vices of narrow-mindedness, bigotry, and ideological sloganeering that he so rightly deplores.

Mr. Shaw's article argues that deconstruction has undergone a "fall" because (1) Paul de Man, one of its chief literary practitioners, while in his early twenties, published some 180 articles in Belgian papers affiliated with the Nazi occupation, and (2) other prominent deconstructionists, such as Jacques Derrida, Geoffrey Hartman, Jonathan Culler, Shoshana Felman, and J. Hillis Miller did not unconditionally condemn and repudiate their friend, colleague, and teacher. . . . By failing to do so, he argues, "the deconstructionists also helped to establish a linkage between . . . [deconstruction and] totalitarian modes of thinking." How so? Well, Heidegger was a Nazi, and Heidegger influenced de Man; two French Heideggerians, Maurice Blanchot and Jean Beaufret, the former of whom was an influence on de Man, were allegedly anti-Semitic; Hans Robert Jauss, a literary theorist and former SS member, was invited by de Man to lecture at Yale.

This is sophistry. It certainly does not demonstrate that deconstruction is "at the root" of totalitarian modes of thinking; it proves only that certain people who held deconstructionist or related ideas happened also to be Nazis or anti-Semites. Does the fact that some deconstructionists happen to be liberals prove that deconstruction is "at the root" Marxist, Jewish, and liberal, as well as fascist, Nazi, and anti-Semitic? Clearly it cannot be *all* of these things at its root, can it?

As for the crime of the deconstructionists, what does it amount to? Mr. Shaw condemns Derrida for his feelings of "bereaved friendship . . . [and] immense compassion—for de Man, not for the slandered and murdered Jews." This is a vile accusation, and Mr. Shaw gives us no reason to believe that Derrida does *not* feel compassion for the victims of Nazism, only that this compassion does not make it impossible for him to feel compassion for his friend de Man as well. Mr. Shaw also condemns the deconstructionists for their incoherent, emotive, sometimes nasty defenses of de Man. But . . . is it really so surprising to see people reacting confusedly and defensively to the discovery that a friend and respected colleague and teacher was actually a Nazi collaborator who abandoned his wife and family and became a bigamist, and lied about his past? . . .

As for "totalitarian modes of thinking": if one were to undertake a phenomenology of 20th-century political evil, the one essential feature that would show up is a bewitchment with ideological abstraction causing a blindness to the suffering and dignity of individuals. But who is more guilty of this: the deconstructionists or Mr. Shaw himself? While condemning the deconstructionst "obsession with violence," he characterizes the human failings of Derrida *et al.* as a "tactical" error opening them to "attack" in what he calls, to cite the title of one of his books, the "war" against the intellect. . . .

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In his indictment, Mr. Shaw alleges that deconstruction attacks the notion that "a text expresses an author's intention," whereas in fact it holds that a text expresses the author's intention and a whole lot more, such that meaning can never be reduced to an author's intention. He claims further that deconstruction denies that texts have meaning, whereas in fact it holds that texts are boiling over with meanings so rich and Protean that they can never be pinned down in a single interpretation. . . .

Mr. Shaw's most egregious error, however, is the error central to all forms of neoconservative cultural criticism, namely, the claim that deconstruction and the forms of academic ultra-leftism that happen to be associated with it are somehow foreign and antithetical to the Western tradition. Nothing could be further from the truth. Rather, deconstruction and ultra-leftism are, for better or worse, the unforced flowers of Western civilization, with roots traceable back to its deepest origins. The deconstructionist tenet that meaning is constituted in both identity and difference, presence and absence, is as old as Plato's *Sophist* and the pre-Socratic philosophers. . . .

Lest I be misrepresented or ideologically pigeonholed, I should add that, although I admire Derrida as a thinker who has probed the deepest issues of philosophy, I am not a fan of deconstruction as it is usually practiced, nor am I a leftist. . . . With Mr. Shaw, I agree that the strident egalitarianism of the academic Left is one-dimensional, fanatical, corrosively antinomian, leading to intolerance, repression, and an ideologically poisoned academic atmosphere. It is also morally and politically irresponsible, for in general it is blithely ignorant of social science and moralistically unconcerned with its practical consequences for ordinary people. The very idea of English professors who cannot even manage to keep their own office hours aspiring to plan the lives of everybody else is absurd on its face.

But there is no necessary connection between this and the deconstructionist truth that reason, morality, civilization, and all its institutions involve distinction, differentiation, and the suppression of otherness. Reason, morality, and civilization *are* repressive: repressive of our childish, irrational, libidinal side—the side that desires to believe, belong, and have its way. . . .

A politically realistic, even "conservative," appropriation of deconstructionist insights would help us to stop rebelling (or posturing) against the repressions that make civilization possible. The solution to the alienation of civilized life is not to destroy the repressive but enabling constraints of civilization, but to make them rational and bearable. Toward this task, we can begin in no better way than by appropriating the ideas of such politically realistic proto- and post-deconstructionists as Rousseau, Hegel, Nietzsche, Freud, Leo Strauss, and Camille Paglia. But it is precisely this sort of creative appropriation that is blocked by ham-fisted polemics such as Mr. Shaw's.

GREGORY R. JOHNSON
Athens, Georgia

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Peter Shaw is certainly right when he criticizes colleges and universities for their "transformation . . . from places of learning to arenas of political confrontation." Nor am I surprised at his belief that deconstruction helped bring about this politicizing of teaching and scholarship. . . . But I am surprised and shocked at Mr. Shaw's argument that deconstruction can be linked with totalitarian values in general (Nazi and Communist) because one of its advocates, Paul de Man, was a Nazi sympathizer a quarter of a century before he wrote about deconstruction. Would Mr. Shaw have any respect for the argument that deconstruction is linked to the values of American democracy because J. Hillis Miller and Richard Rorty are among its most important advocates? Or, to carry the *ad-hominem* argument to absurdity, is deconstruction linked to Jewish values because its founder, Jacques Derrida, is Jewish?

Mr. Shaw knows better; and in the final section of the article he does attempt to describe how the theory of deconstruction helped pave the way for the domination of the liberal arts by the political Left. But Mr. Shaw knows enough about deconstruction to recognize that its emphasis on how language re-

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sists simple and unambiguous meaning is at the opposite end of the neo-Marxist belief that all texts have a definite political meaning. Consequently, he resorts to the following roundabout argument: because deconstruction "undermine[s] the belief that language and literature can reliably convey truth, . . . it played a key part in the disintegration of the traditional curriculum," which, in turn, created "the vacuum" into which moved "the minions of the politically correct. . . . "

This argument is not convincing because, among other reasons, the attack on the great books had nothing to do with their inability to convey meanings, but, on the contrary, derived from the belief on the part of various leftist groups that these great books convey values that are unambiguously Eurocentric, patriarchal, capitalist, and homophobic. Secondly, the power of the leftist minorities in our colleges to enforce their particular orthodoxies on matters relating to race, gender, foreign policy, the political nature of knowledge, etc. has more to do with their ability to convince a great number of teachers and students that the leftist line is correct. Just why the Left was successful in doing so, even as millions of people all over the world were repudiating all kinds of Marxist parties, I don't know. But surely the answers have more to do with the isolation of college teachers and students from the real world than with deconstruction. . . .

Those of us who wish to depoliticize literature should see deconstruction as an ally, and not stretch our ingenuity, as Mr. Shaw and others do, to link it to neo-Marxist theories.

LAWRENCE HYMAN
Ridgewood, New Jersey

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Peter Shaw is perhaps right in suggesting that with respect to Paul de Man's Nazism the deconstructionists did indeed make "a spectacle of themselves at once grotesque and disturbing." But in general he sees deconstruction much too narrowly.

Philosophical movements rarely arise without precursors or disappear without influences. Deconstruction has had its faddish aspects and its dubious political linkages, but it is mistaken (and unhistorical) to take it as *sui generis*, or as wholly a Derridean invention. That texts are obscure, possibly hopelessly obscure, or that authors' intentions are hidden, perhaps hopelessly hidden, are ideas that have been around for a long time. . . .

Mr. Shaw . . . raises a simple banner of Truth and Virtue, which has been shredded and deconstructed by history itself. He does not quite appreciate that a vigorous concern for consistency, though energized long ago by Plato, was also undermined long ago—by Plato.

Mr. Shaw cannot entertain the possibility that the contradictions in which he thinks he traps the defenders of de Man are paradoxes of which they are quite aware. A basic "lesson" of deconstruction is that there may be no knowing whether a text is contradictory or paradoxical, ironic or sincere, and that knowledge of such ignorance may coexist with ignorance of such knowledge. . . .

Linking deconstruction retroactively to Nazism, or currently to Marxism, is misguided. Marxists, and other thoughtless minimalists in academe, attack deconstruction in much the same spirit that they attack any inclination to linguistic richness or complication. It is part of an overall indifference, if not a hostility, to the humanities. For Marxists to engage in anything less than a wholly simplistic ideological communication (which might be another way of characterizing cultural illiteracy) would interfere with the easy flow, and effectiveness, of their political "messages." Deconstruction is anti-totalitarian, as Platonism is, despite hasty and unsubtle readings to the contrary.

Leftist multiculturalism in academe is part of a minimalist and anti-intellectual mind-frame. It involves the conceit of thinking that one can address and cover everything with ease (the text of the world, as it were). This is preferred to the unsettling and inconclusive efforts of probing anything in particular—like the recalcitrance of one slightly complicated sentence.

MORRIS GROSSMAN
Fairfield University
Fairfield, Connecticut

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

There is one point I would like to take exception to in Peter Shaw's clear and informative article. He writes that ". . . in ordinary political terms it [deconstruction] had traveled some distance from those origins [in Nazi ideology], from the Right to the Left side of the political spectrum."

May I respectfully suggest to Mr. Shaw that the journey was not so long as all that: as Erik von Kuehnelt-Leddihn makes clear in his *Leftism Revisited*, both Nazism and Leninist-Stalinist Communism were *leftist* totalitarian ideologies, hostile to everything Left-totalitarians are usually hostile to: religion . . . , family, meaning, truth, the individual, the self-determination of peoples, and, of course, "the Jews." The current rising distaste among our leftists for Israel and its determination to survive in an Arab world is a further proving of the rule.

But my cavil is a pretty small one; Mr. Shaw's article is an otherwise illuminating linkage of nihilistic totalitarianism, deconstruction, and political correctness.

TOM WHITE
Odessa, Texas

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Peter Shaw's excellent discussion of Paul de Man . . . brings to mind another illustrious figure in the pantheon of "tainted greatness"—the late Mircea Eliade, who was a distinguished professor of the history of religion at the University of Chicago until his death in 1986. Born in Bucharest in 1907, Eliade came to America in 1956 and began teaching at Chicago that same year. He quickly achieved extraordinary prestige among students and members of the academic community, and after his death a chair in the history of religion was endowed in his name. In the 30 years of his academic career in America, Eliade never mentioned his Nazi, fascist, and anti-Semitic past of the years 1933-41.

As a Jew born in Romania (in 1919), I can personally recall Eliade's support—expressed in numerous articles and essays—for the nationalist, racist ideology of the Iron Guard, a fascist quasi-military party of the extreme Right founded in 1924 and originally known as the Legion of the Archangel Michael. In 1940, when Romania was a partner of the Axis, Eliade was appointed to a post at the Romanian legation in London, and in 1941 he arrived in Lisbon as Press and Propaganda attaché to the Romanian government.

Radu Ioanid in his book, *The Sword of the Archangel: Fascist Ide-*

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ology in Romania, considers Eliade one of the principal "theoreticians" of the Iron Guard movement and offers numerous quotes from Eliade's writings during the 30's in support of this view. . . .

In his autobiography, Eliade did not mention his close ties to the Iron Guard legionary movement. Nor is the subject raised in Mac Linscott Ricketts's study, *Mircea Eliade—The Romanian Roots 1907-1945.* Two recent articles on Eliade (in *Midstream* and the *New Republic*) have also glossed over these facts.

I believe the Mircea Eliade chair taints the high reputation of the University of Chicago. . . .

BARUCH COHEN
Montreal, Quebec

PETER SHAW writes:

Gregory R. Johnson accuses me of "sophistry" and "vile accusation" in my "ham-fisted polemic," and asks "who is more guilty" of "blindness to the suffering and dignity of individuals . . . : the deconstructionists or Mr. Shaw himself?" He sums me up as exhibiting "none of the virtues of disinterested scholarship that [I] presumably defend, and all of the vices of narrow-mindedness, bigotry, and ideological sloganeering that [I] so rightly deplore." I protest: at no point in my article did I deplore bigotry.

Just how I should have effected a more "creative appropriation" of the virtues of deconstruction is not clear from Mr. Johnson's letter. Is he saying that I should have employed a kinder, gentler language as illustrated by his own characterization of leftist English professors, many of them involved in deconstruction, as apostles of "strident egalitarianism . . . leading to intolerance, repression, and an ideologically poisoned academic atmosphere" and as being "also morally and politically irresponsible"? Difficult as it is for me to write in so nuanced and restrained a fashion, I promise to try the very next time I write about deconstruction.

If Lawrence Hyman is "shocked" at the idea of a link between the totalitarian and the deconstructionist Paul de Man, I am surprised that, astute analyst as he usually is, he should draw the same false parallel as Mr. Johnson does between beliefs and ethnicity. One is born American or Jewish, but one chooses Nazism or deconstruction. De Man not only chose Nazism but served as a literary theorist for it. He later chose deconstruction and served as *its* literary theorist. Surely Mr. Hyman would allow that it makes some sense to ask if there might not be some similarity between the two belief systems de Man served. In fact, I never confirmed such a similarity, as Messrs. Hyman and Johnson assume, or as Tom White in his letter suggests I could have done more extensively. (Mr. White can see from the other letters why I refrained from alleging any more than I did.) I reported that others had linked deconstruction with Nazi totalitarianism, citing David Hirsch, a longtime critic of deconstruction; I should perhaps have added Stanley Corngold, a former student of de Man and previous practitioner of deconstruction, writing in *Critical Review,* the journal Mr. Johnson is associated with.

Mr. Hyman similarly finds it hard to see how deconstruction, since it is theoretically "at the opposite end" from neo-Marxism, can have paved the way for political correctness. First of all, the leading deconstructionists explicitly avow that they are Marxists and Marxist sympathizers (in Mr. Johnson's letter they "happen to be associated" with "academic ultra-leftism"). But their avowals aside, consider the parallel way in which the campus revolution of 1963, calling itself a "free-speech movement," paved the way for today's politically-correct campus speech codes "at the opposite end" of the spectrum from free speech.

Similar theoretical inconsistencies exist between the ecumenical and humane pretensions of campus leftists and their shouting-down of campus speakers with whom they disagree. Mr. Hyman concludes that the Left must have come to dominate the university through an "ability to convince." Here, at least, I hope that he will consider taking the university experience under totalitarianism as a guide to why there has been an intellectual capitulation to the Left in American universities.

Morris Grossman writes that the ideas contained in deconstruction are not really new, since the elusiveness of meaning is an old theme. I agree. Why does he think I don't? And why does he think that I raise "a simple banner of Truth and Virtue"? Whoever has criticized deconstruction has been similarly charged with philosophical simple-mindedness—typically on no evidence whatsoever, as in Mr. Grossman's letter.

Deconstructionists, far from being jauntily aware of the contradiction in their defenses of Paul de Man, as Mr. Grossman claims, apologized for abandoning their principles, as I showed. Finally, for Mr. Grossman, as for Lawrence Hyman, because Marxist theory differs from deconstruction the two cannot possibly have anything to do with each other—as though the Nazi-Soviet pact of 1939 could not possibly have come into being in view of the philosophical incompatibilities between the two systems.

The Noelle-Neumann Case

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

We would like to respond to Leo Bogart's article, "The Pollster and the Nazis" [August 1991], and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's reply [Letters from Readers, January].

As members of a university community, we consider it our duty to uphold academic freedom. That freedom requires that members of our community be permitted to

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hold and express beliefs that may be unpopular. Yet we also have an obligation to oppose bigotry. The past activities of Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann, a visiting professor in our department, have forced us to consider how we act when these principles are opposed.

We do not wish to silence Dr. Noelle-Neumann, either for what she wrote in the past or what she believes now. It would have been equally inappropriate to ask for her resignation. But we must challenge Dr. Noelle-Neumann's understanding of her past conduct, because it reveals an inadequate appreciation of why her writings and statements in the Nazi period were harmful and deeply offensive. Because her failure to understand the true nature of anti-Semitism is not unique, it is especially important that we identify what is at stake.

Dr. Noelle-Neumann has offered a detailed response to Leo Bogart's charges, in an effort to explain her behavior and to live up to her moral obligations. In brief, she portrays herself as a naive young woman torn between her own beliefs and the realities of power in a totalitarian state. She admits that she joined a Nazi youth group in order to obtain permission to study abroad, and she acknowledges using anti-Semitic phrases in her writings. She defends these actions as a compromise taken in order to preserve her capacity to subvert Nazi rule in other ways. With the benefit of hindsight, she now offers a conditional apology. "If" her actions harmed Jews, she writes, she is "terribly sorry." She condemns the Holocaust, and adds that the memory of that event will haunt her forever, as it should all of us.

Unfortunately, Dr. Noelle-Neumann's response suggests that she does not understand the full nature of anti-Semitism and her own contribution to it. Anti-Semitism—or racism or sexism—is not simply hatred or active persecution. More importantly, anti-Semitism is about *exclusion*. In its more common forms, anti-Semitism denies Jews full membership in civil society, simply because they are Jews. In its most virulent forms—as in the Nazi period—Jews are even denied full status as humans.

The obvious danger is that once Jews (or any other social group) are excluded from full membership in society purely on the basis of group characteristics, it becomes easier to justify taking virtually any action against them. By identifying Jews in Germany and elsewhere as an alien and corrupting influence, Dr. Noelle-Neumann's writings helped reinforce the belief that Jews were not entitled to basic rights as citizens and as human beings.

Dr. Noelle-Neumann's writings did not advocate the Holocaust. Properly speaking, her writings did not even consent to it. But by providing rhetorical support for the exclusion of Jews, her words helped make the disreputable reputable, the indecent decent, the uncivilized civilized, and the unthinkable thinkable.

This is the moral failure that requires an apology. Whether she intended to harm Jews or not is irrelevant. By supporting their exclusion, as millions of others did as well, her actions *did* harm Jews. Contrition in this case cannot be conditional, and apologies must be made without ifs, ands, or buts.

STEPHEN M. WALT
GERALD N. ROSENBERG
DAVID D. LAITIN
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RUSSELL HARDIN
JOHN MARK HANSEN
BERNARD S. SILBERMAN
NORMAN NIE
CHARLES LIPSON
DANIEL VERDIER
DUNCAN SNIDAL
Department of Political Science
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Leo Bogart's article attempts to link Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's alleged anti-Semitism to responsibility for the Holocaust and to support for the Nazi regime of the Third Reich. Doing so raises the question of what kind of conduct is at issue—agency, complicity, or resistance? Agency would mean that Dr. Noelle-Neumann both intended something like the Holocaust and Nazi rule to happen and acted to bring them about. I do not think such a view of her intentions or actions can be sustained. Complicity in bad or evil events is common and harder to judge. (I will comment on complicity below at greater length.) Resistance would mean that she was opposed to Hitler's Nazi regime and, when possible, acted accordingly.

Basing my judgment in part on her response in COMMENTARY to the Bogart article, a response I find credible and persuasive, and in part on my assessment of her as a person and as a professional, resistance seems a more plausible interpretation than agency. But even while, on occasion, she resisted, her experiences as a student and her early career as a journalist can be read as complicity in the Nazi regime and in the perpetuation of anti-Semitism. But what are we to make of such complicity? Why did she use anti-Semitic language? Is anti-Semitism one thing or several? If several, what consequences have followed from different forms and uses of anti-Semitism?

Her complicity can be explained in considerable measure as a consequence of her choice to resist from within. . . . She neither left the country nor withdrew into a "safe" occupation. In the event, she decided to stay and to pursue a career in journalism. In a totalitarian regime, maintaining opportunities to resist, whether as a student writing a Ph.D. or as a journalist with *Das Reich* or the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, entailed a measure of compliance-with-regime language. How much and what kind of compliance is at issue, not whether she intended or acted to support the Nazi regime or to cause the Holocaust.

Some have argued that unless a person in Nazi Germany overtly resisted by not appearing to be anti-Semitic, he or she bears some responsibility for the Holocaust. Too few Germans stood up for the Jews. Anti-Semitic ideas were widely accepted. Those who, like Dr. Noelle-Neumann, wrote in this vein helped to inculcate and legitimize an anti-Semitic German mentality. Such persons, the argument goes, bear a heavy responsibility for the Holocaust. How persuasive is this view?

Dr. Noelle-Neumann says she went along on one occasion by joining a National Socialist student organization at her university as a necessary condition for getting a scholarship to study in the U.S. This I read as complicity, not agency. Later, as a journalist at *Das Reich* and the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*, she says she used National Socialist language so that she could resist from within, a position that involves complicity as a trade-off for resistance. Her critics have denied that her writing at *Das Reich* . . . can be counted as anti-

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Nazi. But . . . the Third Reich Ministry of Propaganda seems to have viewed what she wrote as resistance. Otherwise we cannot account for her being fired and blacklisted.

When we move from the level of individual responsibility to the historical level, the causal connection between anti-Semitism and the Holocaust becomes even more attenuated. Many readers of Paul Lawrence Rose's recent book, *Revolutionary Anti-Semitism in Germany From Kant to Wagner*, will be surprised to learn that anti-Semitism in modern Germany can be traced as far back as 1793, the year Kant's *Religion in the Bounds of Rationality* appeared. According to Rose, Kant and Fichte argued that the Jews exemplified the kind of degraded moral existence to which they were opposed. Fervently moral anti-Semitism, Rose argues, was the work of radical or revolutionary thinkers, not only Kant, Fichte, and Herder, but also Feuerbach, Bruno Bauer, and Marx. The more obvious anti-Semitism of German romantic idealism best exemplified by Wagner also has to be counted as contributing to anti-Semitic discourse. In this reading, some are more complicit than others in establishing and perpetuating anti-Semitism, but who can be said to have intended or caused Nazism or the Holocaust? Is there a difference between conventional and deadly anti-Semitism, between anti-Semitism as racialism and anti-Semitism as genocide? . . .

In the 1930's, admiration for Hitler and anti-Semitism were actively present in America as well as in Europe, not least among respectable people in high places. It was not until Nazi Germany was defeated that the world learned that in 1942 a "Final Solution" had been decided upon and the Holocaust was revealed. It was then that Nazi racism that dehumanized and demonized "the other" was identified as a crime against humanity. Ethnic hatred and fear remain with us, but human rights, including the crime of genocide, have now become an increasingly enforceable worldwide concern.

With these considerations in mind, how should we judge Dr. Noelle-Neumann's anti-Semitic language as a twenty-year-old attending the University of Missouri's School of Journalism and, after her return to Germany, as a Ph.D. student and young journalist? She was wrong, she says, not to have recognized in Missouri the enormity of the implications of the National Socialist regime's racism or its willingness to wage aggressive war. She defends her use of anti-Semitic language as a Ph.D. student and a journalist as the condition for resistance. Whether defensible or not, her complicity stands. What should we make of her complicity in the use of conventional anti-Semitic language and arguments and of her failure to see or anticipate the extremes to which Hitler was prepared to go?

In America in the 1930's the America First Committee saw no need to oppose Hitler. It counted about half the American electorate among its supporters. It was Pearl Harbor that brought America into the war against Hitler, not opposition to anti-Semitism. Franklin Roosevelt may have wanted to oppose Hitler but it was for geopolitical reasons, not because he was concerned about the fate of Jews in Germany. Indeed, he has been roundly criticized for his indifference to their fate. It was only after the war when knowledge of the Holocaust seized the world's moral imagination that Hitler's racism became a cause of our involvement. In judging Dr. Noelle-Neumann's underestimation of the Nazi regime's capacity for evil in the 1930's, it is important to remember that she was not alone in her complicity. . . .

Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann played an important part in the Adenauer generation's successful effort to create a democratic Germany. Resistant but complicit as a youthful journalist under Hitler, she has for forty years been an exemplary person and professional. In my view she has been unfairly and wrongly accused, judged, and censored. Apologies are needed but not from her.

LLOYD I. RUDOLPH
Department of Political Science
University of Chicago
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Leo Bogart's article and Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's reply—a debate which spilled over into the New York *Times*—have stirred up some old memories in me; in particular her statement that "*Das Reich* was not Goebbels's paper, . . . on the contrary, its editors were from Germany's best and most liberal newspapers."

During World War II, as a member of an Allied Psychological Warfare team first in North Africa and Italy (1943-44) and later in France and Germany (1944-45), I was assigned to monitor and report on Axis radio propaganda.

The highlight of the German radio propaganda effort was the weekly reading on Fridays of Goebbels's article in *Das Reich* over all German radio stations, including short-wave and army stations. To emphasize the importance of these articles, they were read by Goebbels himself at the beginning and later entrusted to the "Speaker of the German Radio." This article set the tone and "leitmotif" for the following week's German propaganda line. The last article appeared on April 21, 1945, under the heading "The Hour of Final Triumph Awaits Us."

If any German publication could be considered Goebbels's own mouthpiece, it was *Das Reich*.

IRVING M. ROSENBAUM
New York City

Marie Syrkin Fellowship

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Last year, in memory of Marie Syrkin, poet, essayist, teacher, and Zionist leader, the Marie Syrkin Fellowship in Letters in Jerusalem was established. The Fellowship is open to writers in all the forms, though the judges (Irving Howe, Cynthia Ozick, and myself) will honor Marie Syrkin's preference for belles-lettres over scholarly research. Applications should include a brief statement of the project for which the support is asked and a representative sample of recent work. They should be received at The Marie Syrkin Fellowship, 1220 19th Street, NW, Suite 600, Washington, D.C. 20036, no later than April 15.

LEON WIESELTIER
New Republic
Washington, D.C.

Correction

In the exchange between Elihu Bergman and Edward Norden [Letters from Readers, March], the title of an article by Mr. Bergman was incorrectly cited. The correct title is "The American Jewish Population Erosion" (*Midstream*, October 1977)—ED.

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COMMITTEE ON U.S. INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST

The undersigned believe that the essence of U.S. national security policy should be the protection and expansion of the community of nations that: (1) Safeguard the personal and property rights of their citizens, (2) Limit their own governments' powers within the rule of law, (3) Respect the rights of other nations and (4) Otherwise apply to themselves the standards of democracy that are the pride, but not the exclusive province, of Western civilization. In support of these objectives, we have joined together to form the **COMMITTEE ON U.S. INTERESTS IN THE MIDDLE EAST.** We advocate support for a U.S. policy toward Israel that would – in contrast to current American policy – reflect the traditional, strong American support for the legitimacy, security and general well-being of the Jewish State: a proven, valuable, democratic friend and ally of the United States.

PRAGMATIC AND MORAL CONSIDERATIONS ARGUE FOR STRONG U.S.-ISRAELI TIES

We reject the notion of **moral equivalency** that underlies current U.S. policy toward Israel and her Arab enemies. It is as inappropriate here as American "even-handedness" would have been between Iraq and Kuwait after Saddam's invasion. The target of aggressive designs is not equivalent to the aggressor.

A simplistic moral equivalency doctrine also used to afflict the debates over U.S.-Soviet relations. The overwhelming rejection of Communism throughout the former Soviet empire was a reproach to those who were unable or unwilling to choose sides, to make sensible value judgements, to distinguish between aggression and defense, to tell good from evil or to recognize who, in essence, are the"good guys" (despite their faults) and who are the"bad guys" (despite any merits).

Communism's demise should teach us that a moral compass is one of the most important, practical tools of U.S. foreign policy.

American support for freedom, democracy and Western values over totalitarianism, tyranny and anti-Western ideologies should be the rule for U.S. policy, including in the Middle East. As friendly as the United States is with many Arab states, when it comes to the Arab-Israeli conflict, the United States must be squarely on the side of the Israelis.

Commitment to the right of the Jewish people to a state in their ancient homeland – support for Zionism as the legitimate Jewish national liberation movement – has been American policy since World War I. While Arab powers have always rejected this view – opposing it through rioting, terrorism, war and diplomacy – the United States has always opposed their rejectionism. It should continue to do so today, and not deal "even-handedly" between Israel and its enemies.

FOCUS ON MAXIMIZING ISRAEL'S SECURITY – NOT TERRITORIAL CONCESSIONS

There can be *true* peace — as opposed to a simple balance of forces — only if neither side to the conflict intends harm to the other. This would require Arab rejectionists to change their minds fundamentally with regard to the right of the Jews to a state in Palestine. Undoubtedly, there are individual Arabs willing to make peace with Israel; unfortunately, they are not in charge in the Arab states and groups with whom Israel is now being asked to negotiate. Israel cannot simply assume that its long-time, bitter enemies have had a change of heart under present circumstances, when there is so much evidence to the contrary and when the costs of being wrong may be fatal to the Jewish State. No American leader should subject Israel to untoward security risks.

Hence the proper aim of the current negotiations should be establishing whether the Arab powers intend peace and, if so,what they can do to *demonstrate* their intent. This means not just issuing set-piece invocations involving the word "peace" and demands for militarily significant territorial concessions from Israel. To be constructive, the current talks should focus on the essence of the conflict: recognition of Israel's legitimacy – *not* on undermining Israel's security. Were Arab governments to concentrate on shoring up Israel's legitimacy with their publics, abandoning policies of belligerency and ceasing (at least for the time being) to press territorial demands that would increase Israel's military vulnerability, they would maximize the chances for peace. In this regard, American officials should not make the dangerous error of underestimating Israel's view of the strategic importance of the West Bank, Gaza and the Golan Heights under present and foreseeable circumstances. It puts wholly unwarranted faith in international law to expect that arms control agreements within peace treaties can ensure that these territories would continue to serve their defensive purposes if Israel were to relinquish control to another state.

What ultimately happens to the sovereignty over these disputed territories *once there is a well-established, secure and workable peace* is a matter the parties should sort out among themselves. *It should not now be a preoccupation of the United States.* Until then, moreover, America should not engage in pressure diplomacy against Israel that may bring on the war we are hoping to prevent. This applies in particular to efforts to foist on Israel territorial concessions that would, if accepted by the Israelis, create *de facto* – if not *de jure* – American security obligations that we are simply in no position to fulfill. It would be unwise for the United States to take a country (Israel) now in a position to defend itself and even to help us in certain regional contingencies and turn it into a state that relies on U.S. forces for its defense, something Israel has strenuously and properly resisted.

Michael Barnes	Former Member of Congress (D-MD)
William Bennett	Former Secretary of Education; former Dir., Office of Nat'l Drug Control Policy
William Brodhead	Former Member of Congress (D-MI)
Tony Coelho	Former Member of Congress (D-CA)
Jim Courter	Former Member of Congress (R-NJ)
Stuart Eizenstat	Former Assistant to the President
Leonard Garment	Former Counsel to the President
William Graham	Former Science Advisor to the President; former Chairman, President's General Advisory Comm. on Arms Control
George A. Keyworth II	Former Science Advisor to the President
John F. Lehman, Jr.	Former Secretary of the Navy
Elliott Abrams	Former Assistant Secretary of State
Morris Amitay	Former Foreign Service Officer
Robert Andrews	Former National Intelligence Officer, CIA
Stephen D. Bryen	Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense
Linda Chavez	Former Director, White House Public Liaison
Kenneth DeGraffenreid	Former Special Assistant to the President
Charles Fairbanks, Jr.	Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of State
Douglas J. Feith	Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
Frank J. Gaffney, Jr.	Former Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense
Margaret Graham	Former Special Assistant to the Legal Advisor, Dept. of State
James T. Hackett	Former Acting Dir., Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Alan Keyes	Former Assistant Secretary of State
Charles Kupperman	Former Special Assistant to the President
Michael Novak	Former U.S. Amb. to the U.N. Human Rights Commission
Myer Rashish	Former Under Secretary of State
Eugene V. Rostow	Former Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency; former Under Secretary of State
William Schneider	Former Under Sec. of State; former Associate Dir., OMB
Bernard A. Schriever, *General, USAF (ret.)*	Former Commander, Air Force Systems Command
Donn A. Starry, *General, USAF (ret.)*	Former Commander, Readiness Command
Faith Whittlesey	Former U.S. Ambassador to Switzerland; former member, senior White House staff
Richard S. Williamson	Former Assistant to the President; former Asst. Sec. of State
Sinclair Melner *Lt. General, USA (ret.)*	Former Deputy Chairman, NATO Military Committee
Michael Mobbs	Former Asst. Dir., Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
William Murphy	Former Director of Research, Radio Free Europe
Richard Perle	Former Assistant Secretary of Defense
Bruce Porter	Former Executive Director, Board for International Broadcasting
Roger W. Robinson, Jr.	Former Senior Director, National Security Council
Robert F. Shoultz *Vice Admiral, USN (ret.)*	Former Deputy Commander, U.S. Naval Forces, Europe
William Van Cleave	Former Chairman, President's General Advisory Comm. on Arms Control
Dov Zakheim	Former Deputy Under Secretary of Defense

Mail Contributions to: **Committee on U.S. Interests in the Middle East** 1250 24th Street, N.W. Suite 600E, Washington, D.C. 20037 Tel. 1-202-835-1604
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Magnificent, But Was It War?

Angelo M. Codevilla

"*C'est magnifique, mais ce n'est pas la guerre.*" Thus in 1854 did a French observer dismiss the Light Brigade's charge into the Russian guns at Balaklava during the Crimean War. War consists less of shooting than it does of figuring out objectives worthy of killing and dying for, and then of applying means proportionate to the ends. Because the British commanders in the Crimea had not thought through the relationship between ends and means, the Light Brigade's heroism produced only dead bodies.

One year after the Gulf War, are we, too, compelled to say that it was magnificent but that it was not war? Yes and no. Yes, in the sense that the U.S. achieved disproportionately less than its massive and technically flawless military effort warranted—and precisely because George Bush failed at the essential test of thinking through what the enemy was about, what our objectives should be, and what we had to do to achieve them. But no, in the sense that there can be little doubt that the world is better off—at least for a little while—than it would have been had the war not been fought.

By 1990 Saddam Hussein had become a clear and present danger to his Arab neighbors, to Israel, and to the world. His well-equipped, million-man army was developing medium-range ballistic missiles, and was within a year or two of producing atomic bombs. Saddam had already begun to overawe the region. At his insistence, Saudi Arabia and the Gulf Emirates had canceled billions of dollars' worth of debts he had incurred during his war against Iran (1981-88). They were increasingly receptive to his calls for raising the world price of oil. And he was successfully portraying himself to the impoverished Arab masses as their champion against plutocratic rulers and, of course, against Israel.

In 1990, one could see over the horizon a time when Saddam's nuclear weapons could shield whatever horrors he might choose to sponsor in the Middle East, and whatever convulsions his manipulations of the price of oil might force upon the world's economy. Today, by contrast, Saddam is under siege. The flower of his air force is interned in Iran, the wrecks of about half his tanks litter the vicinity of Kuwait, and his ability to replenish his power by selling his country's oil is restricted. A goodly portion of his nuclear-weapons program has been wrecked. His political power in the Arab world is diminished.

Saddam's regime, however, may be compared to a bacterial infection that has been treated with enough antibiotics to make the patient feel better, but not enough to kill it. The patient has every reason to fear that in time the infection will become more virulent, and meet less resistance, than before.

The core of Saddam's regime, its police, emerged unscathed from the Gulf War. He has reestablished his army, especially his six Republican Guard divisions, and has begun to play hide-and-seek with the international inspectors who are supposed to supervise his disarmament. As the CIA recently reported, the essence of the Iraqi nuclear program—its personnel—is intact and can be expected to produce weapons a few years after import restrictions are eased. Saddam knows, as do his neighbors, that absent America's will to go to war again, there is every historical reason to believe that restrictions will fade away and that domestic hiders will prevail over foreign seekers.

Saddam's Kuwaiti, Saudi, and other neighbors are politically weaker than ever, having shown that they can survive only through the support of infidels. Hence Saddam is well-positioned to resume both his military and his political threats. That is why his neighbors are beginning to make plans for living in his shadow—plans not so different from those they were making in 1990. Israel too has every reason to be worried. The principal long-term effect of the Gulf War seems to be a growing animosity toward Israel in the U.S., and the development of a Washington-Damascus axis.

Many who praise Bush for making war on Saddam cannot understand why he did not finish it. Yet Bush's handling of the beginning and middle of the war was no less capricious, no more rational, no more respecting of the historical norms of war than was the end. Throughout, Bush

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showed a phobia against elaborating policy through the clash of ideas and thereby failed to clarify what he was really after, and whether this or that measure would achieve the desired result.

To make matters worse, he was not surrounded by self-respecting advisers like Dean Acheson, James Forrestal, or even Harold Brown—men who, right or wrong, would argue their point, and help the President they served reach informed decisions. Instead, books such as Jean Edward Smith's *George Bush's War* and Bob Woodward's *The Commanders* confirm one's impression that Bush's advisers were yes-men. They also agreed with Bush's preference for keeping Congress from exercising its responsibility to declare (or not to declare) war. But Congress too has taken a dislike to open discussion and accountable decisions. As a result, the U.S. government collectively made a series of decisions that would have seemed as absurd in the light of open discussion as they now seem in retrospect.

When the Iraqi threat loomed, the U.S. government appeased. When Saddam invaded Kuwait, the U.S. government treated the invasion as the problem to be solved rather than as a symptom of the problem, which was Saddam Hussein's hostile priorities. By focusing on the Kuwaiti symptom rather than on the Iraqi disease, Bush put himself in the worst of positions: Iraq could meet his maximum demand, and yet win the confrontation. During the war, Bush and his team finally came to see that they had to eliminate Saddam or lose. Yet no sooner did Bush have Saddam in his power than the same advice he had received during the years of appeasement, plus fear of the responsibilities of victory, convinced him to let the Iraqi dictator go.

A year later, the first and most difficult prerequisite for fixing the mistakes of the past is admitting them. But before that, one must understand them.

THE roots of the Gulf War go back to the U.S. government's decision in 1956 to sabotage Britain and France's defense of their contractual rights in the Suez Canal. Britain soon responded by renouncing all its commitments "east of Suez," and ever since then the U.S. government, while refusing to take on the role of colonial power, has tried any number of schemes to bring to the oil-rich Persian Gulf the friendly stability that the British had enforced in the past. As befits self-contradictory attempts, these schemes have all failed.

First, in the aftermath of Suez, the U.S. counted on the Baghdad Pact, which tied Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan into an alliance that geographically connected NATO Europe with America's Asian allies. This paper alliance fell apart in 1958 when Abdul Karim Kassem, an admirer of Egypt's Gamal Abdel Nasser (whom the U.S. had made a hero in 1956), took power in Baghdad and gave Iraq the first of a series of regimes that have been as nasty at home as they have been abroad.

For the next twenty years, the U.S. depended on the Shah of Iran to act as its "pillar" in the region. So axiomatic was the Shah's importance that the U.S. government considered discussions of flaws in his regime to be in bad taste and lacking in "realism." That, and not any lack of information, is why the Shah's total collapse in 1979 came as such a great surprise to Washington.

Soon thereafter, when President Jimmy Carter faced the "nightmare scenario" that the Persian Gulf—Europe's and Japan's principal source of oil—might be conquered by a now-hostile Iran, and possibly by the Soviet Union, he reluctantly proclaimed as a "doctrine" that the U.S. would fight to prevent it. But it was only under George Bush in 1991 that the Carter Doctrine was actually brought into play, albeit against a new devil, Saddam Hussein.

Yet this same Saddam Hussein had for the previous ten years been regarded as growing into the role of pillar previously played by the Shah and as (in the words of Brent Scowcroft, Bush's National Security Adviser) "a reasonably responsible member of the international community." During Iraq's war against Iran, Saddam had been seen as the bulwark against Washington's *bête noire du jour*, the Ayatollah Khomeini's "Shiite fundamentalism." And so, in 1981, when Israeli bombers destroyed Iraq's Osirak nuclear reactor, the U.S. government's best and brightest trooped to Capitol Hill to express heartfelt rage. Bobby Ray Inman, the deputy director of the CIA, accused Israel of having set back a delicate plan to make Saddam play a useful role in the region. (Indeed, the CIA would soon supply Iraq with satellite photos of Iranian units.) In March 1982, the State Department removed Iraq from the list of states sponsoring terrorism—and kept it off despite the fact that the PLO's Abu Abbas and others continued to operate out of Baghdad. In 1982 also, the U.S. began to give Iraq credits for the purchase of American grain. In 1987, the U.S. uncritically accepted Iraq's explanation that its attack on the USS *Stark* (which cost 37 American lives) was an accident. In 1988, while the world (and much of the U.S. Congress) gasped at Saddam's gas attack on a Kurdish village, the U.S. government concluded that it too might have been an accident of the Iran-Iraq war. In 1990, the U.S. Ambassador to Iraq, April Glaspie, apologized for a Voice of America (VOA) editorial that had criticized Saddam as a "brutal dictator." Secretary of State James A. Baker 3d, angry at the VOA, insisted that all of its broadcasts dealing with Iraq be cleared by his (supposedly wiser) staff. On the eve of the invasion of Kuwait, the State Department killed a VOA editorial restating the U.S. commitment to its friends in the Gulf.

During 1990, as Saddam stepped up his anti-

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Israel, anti-Saudi, and anti-American rhetoric, plus pressure on Kuwait for territorial concessions and money, the question arose of what he wanted. The consensus in the administration was that he wanted nothing that was incompatible with U.S. interests. On July 24, 1990, Baker cabled instructions to Glaspie for her dealings with the Iraqi government. The next day she met with Saddam and followed her script: the U.S. sought good relations with Saddam; the President would not be unhappy to see the price of oil rise to $25 a barrel; the U.S. had no opinion on the substance of conflicts between Arab states, and specifically on Saddam's quarrel with Kuwait.

The day before Iraq's invasion, with Saddam's divisions poised on the Kuwaiti border, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly told the House Foreign Affairs Committee that the U.S. had no obligation to intervene on behalf of any country in the Persian Gulf. On August 2, 1990, the day of the invasion, Glaspie was quoted as being surprised that Saddam had taken *all* of Kuwait. She and the administration had expected him to take only a part, and had not been particularly concerned.

On the morning of August 2, President Bush met with the National Security Council to consider the Iraqi invasion. The desultory conversation came to a unanimous conclusion by default: the Persian Gulf was too far away and Iraq too powerful for the U.S. to affect events except through a gigantic effort. Besides, although Saddam had done more than all but one (low-ranking) intelligence analyst had expected, he was not threatening any vital American interests. Nor were Iraqi troops mistreating civilians.

Later that day Bush spoke with Egypt's President Mubarak and Jordan's King Hussein, who shared these views and thought that the Arab countries might well reach some sort of settlement. Saddam might keep a few pieces of Kuwait, and the Kuwaiti royal family might have to move to Switzerland, but nothing much would change.

WHY, then, did the U.S. government go on to make Iraq's invasion of Kuwait a *casus belli*?

Because that same afternoon Bush spoke with British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, who convinced him that Saddam was Hitler, Kuwait was the Rhineland, and this was 1936. Thatcher having, in the words of the Manchester *Guardian*, performed a "backbone transplant" on him, Bush now declared: "This will not stand." Thereafter, he consistently denounced Saddam as evil and affirmed that he would stand up for good.

But in turning against Saddam, Bush seems never to have asked himself a number of necessary questions: What is it about Saddam that I object to? Is it the invasion of Kuwait? Is it the possibility that he might invade other countries? Is it that he might exercise the wrong kind of leadership in the Arab world? Was I dreadfully wrong in trying to get along with Saddam while I knew that he was building nuclear weapons and awesome conventional forces but thought that he was going to take only *part* of Kuwait? If I was not dreadfully wrong, then what difference does the invasion of Kuwait make? Why am I even thinking of sending Americans to kill and die in the Arabian desert? And if my policy of relying on the strongest regional power in the Gulf—regardless of its internal character—was mistaken, or if it quite simply failed, am I willing to adopt the alternative? Am I willing to interfere in the internal affairs of the Gulf countries to make sure that they respect one another as well as the interests of the West?

Since the decision to send American troops was made without answering such questions, different sets of people within the government were left to develop their own diagnoses and prescriptions. The National Security Council staff and the Defense Department civilians—the hawks who focused on the President's dictum that the invasion of Kuwait must not stand—saw U.S. forces as a shield behind which the U.S. and the UN would squeeze Iraq until Saddam realized that the costs of occupying Kuwait exceeded the benefits. Then he would pull out. But these people did not consider that perhaps the real problem—the military and political primacy of a hostile Iraqi regime—was broader than Saddam's occupation of Kuwait and could not be fixed by a pull-out. For after Iraqi troops had retreated a few miles and the Americans had gone back to the other side of the globe, the problem might well be worse.

The "doves"—James Baker's State Department, backed by the editorial page of the New York *Times*—thought that the situation was comparable not to Hitler's occupation of the Rhineland in 1936 but to the Soviet Union's occupation of Eastern Europe. Hence their prescription was to "contain" Iraq with a political-military commitment analogous to NATO. But this group did not realize that what had worked in Europe was—physically, socially, and politically—a non-starter in the Persian Gulf. Whereas two generations of American personnel had enjoyed Germany's beer, fräuleins, and conferences on the Rhine or in the Alps, American endurance of a Saudi populace at least as forbidding as the burning sand could be measured only in months. Moreover, whereas the Soviet Communists' anti-American appeals had found resonance only in a small and decreasing percentage of Europe's population, Saddam's call to rally against an army of Christians, women, and Jews on Muslim soil appealed to a large and growing population of Arabs. NATO in the Gulf or, as the columnist William Safire of the *Times* dubbed it, Gulfo, should never have received a second thought.

The point is that Bush and his people should have seen that the problem lay in the very exist-

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ence of Saddam's regime. As such, it presented the U.S. with only two real alternatives: either to overthrow and replace that regime with an acceptable one (or at least to overthrow it and retain the capacity to crush any unacceptable successor), or to do whatever necessary to appease it. One is reminded of Machiavelli's rule of thumb: enemies are either to be caressed or extinguished. Yet since the two real alternatives were so demanding, the Bush administration preferred not to look at either, but to imagine that there existed easier diagnoses and prescriptions somewhere in the middle.

One reason the Bush administration was so unclear about what it wanted in the Gulf was that it avoided domestic debate and concentrated on securing authorization for its plans from the United Nations, and above all from Mikhail Gorbachev.

Perhaps the most pernicious, and the least warranted, of the hangovers from the Vietnam era is the Beltway conservatives' veneration of presidential prerogative and their mistrust of the American people. Never mind that, at every point of the Vietnam decade, public-opinion polls were more hawkish than administration policy. Never mind that, whenever Presidents have undertaken vigorous action abroad—from Nixon's Cambodian invasion to Bush's invasion of Panama—public opinion has rallied behind them and dragged Congress along. It was still an article of faith in the Bush White House that the American people could not be trusted to hear the real number of troops being sent to the Gulf without gagging, that they would not stand for any talk of offensive warfare, and that they would not tolerate the killing of Saddam Hussein—even after the polls showed that some 80 percent of Americans wanted him dead.

It was also White House dogma that Congress was a treacherous enemy. Again, never mind that Congress has asserted itself in foreign affairs only when Presidents have been hesitant, and that Presidents who press their foreign agenda on Congress invariably win. Never mind, too, that the Constitution confers upon Congress alone the power to declare war. The Bush administration still did everything in its power to prevent Congress from exercising its responsibility, including, in the end, proposing that a congressional debate be held the week after it had planned to start hostilities.

This attachment to executive prerogative is most unconservative. Indeed, it stems most immediately from the belief of the liberal sophisticates in the Kennedy and Johnson administrations that they could manage the Vietnam conflict to a mutually acceptable solution if only they could resist the American people's simplistic demand, echoed by Senator Barry Goldwater, to "win or get out." But as Colonel Harry Summers points out in *On Strategy*, not declaring war turned out to be the biggest mistake the U.S. made in Vietnam. Summers shows that when entering major commitments—war quite as much as marriage—the most important thing people can do is declare their intentions. This is not so much out of "a decent respect for the opinions of mankind" as because declaring commitments forces people to face the implications of what they are doing, and presses them to "do it right" or not at all.

During the Gulf War the Bush administration's self-styled conservatives, far from negating the Vietnam heritage, personified it in the sense that they too thought themselves more sophisticated than the people, and they too feared that a declaration of war would limit their flexibility.

Instead of Congress, therefore, it was foreign leaders with whom George Bush worked out what U.S. forces would and would not do in the Gulf. But these leaders had their own priorities.

Gorbachev played both sides. He supported Bush's demand that Saddam leave Kuwait, but he clearly opposed interference in the internal affairs of Iraq. The great importance that Bush placed on acting in concert with Gorbachev is one of the principal reasons the U.S. never made changing the Iraqi regime part of its policy.

Egypt's President Mubarak, Syria's dictator Hafez al-Assad, and other Arab leaders also helped to entangle U.S. policy. These Arabs were willing enough for the U.S. to save them from Saddam. But they asked Bush to pay for the privilege of doing so by distancing the U.S. from Israel. And, as we shall soon see, they were instrumental in Bush's decision to preserve Saddam's regime.

As in Vietnam, then, America's war in the Gulf was essentially military, conducted largely without regard to creating specific postwar conditions. "First we're going to cut it off, then we're going to kill it," said the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Colin Powell, referring to America's primary focus, the Iraqi army in Kuwait. But the bombing of central Iraq that accomplished the cutoff also gave the U.S. its main opportunity to affect the postwar world. To the limits of the intelligence information available (which was not very good), the U.S. Air Force set back Iraq's nuclear- and chemical-weapons establishment. It also dropped bombs on military headquarters. But—true to repeated declarations by Bush and Powell—the U.S. never targeted any individual. Indeed, when, during the last week of the war, the U.S. Air Force located Saddam Hussein and asked for permission to bomb him, the President said no. He would kill the draftees, not the drafter.

Ironically, killing the Iraqi army was not a prerequisite for a real victory. Because the bulk of it was dug into the Kuwaiti sands, pinned down by U.S. air power, the Iraqi army could not have

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stopped any U.S. move either to Baghdad or to support the self-determination of Kurds and Shiites. Any such move would have doomed Saddam. But U.S. military leaders nowadays do not think in such terms. For them, high strategy means flanking maneuvers. Hence, war meant killing the Iraqi army.

To kill the Iraqi army the U.S. planned first to secure control of the air by destroying radars, communications, aircraft, and other equipment associated with air defense; second, to destroy the military's command, control, communications, and logistical systems; third, to destroy up to one-half of the tanks, planes, and people in the bunkers. Having done this, U.S. ground forces would flush the remaining Iraqis out of their bunkers, exposing them to the full fury of U.S. combined arms. The Americans would be able to approach Iraqi positions in relative safety because accurate fire from airplanes and helicopters would keep the Iraqis' heads down. Meanwhile, an encircling maneuver from the west would trap the survivors and make them prisoners. The U.S. armed forces were confident that they could execute what they had planned. And they did, brilliantly.

Once defeated, the Iraqi army began to dissolve, much as the slave armies of the region have done after every defeat they have suffered since the time of Alexander the Great.* Had the historic pattern been allowed to play itself out, the long-oppressed subjects of the tyrant's empire, who had already taken arms, would have been joined by a rabble of defeated troops, and would have found that the tyrant's defenders had melted away or had killed him themselves. But George Bush arrested that pattern. Forced to choose between, on the one hand, superintending Iraq's revolution and reconstruction, and, on the other, saving Saddam and thus permitting him to seek hegemony another day, he chose the latter.

Thus, Bush's unilateral cease-fire of February 27, 1991, saved two heavily armed Republican Guard divisions from being disarmed or destroyed. Immediately after the cease-fire, the U.S. had to deal with thousands of prisoners of war who were eager to take refuge indefinitely in American-held territory, or to fight Saddam, or simply to wander home. On orders from Washington, U.S. forces turned them over to the Iraqi army, sending an unmistakable signal that since the army had nothing more to fear from the Americans, civilians should start fearing the army again. Later, civilian refugees flocked to U.S.-held territory. On orders from Washington, U.S. forces sent them back. Same signal.

On March 3, 1991, General H. Norman Schwarzkopf forbade Iraqi commanders to fly their helicopters or fixed-wing planes, and made a partial exception for supply flights. Ten days later, the world learned that, immediately, the Iraqis had begun using helicopters to bomb and strafe rebellious Kurds and Shiites. The rebellions had been incited a bit by the CIA, more by Bush's February 15 call for the Iraqi people to overthrow Saddam, but most of all by the near-dissolution of Saddam's army. Yet even though U.S. policy had quickly stopped this dissolution, the Kurdish and Shiite rebels had been able to take control of the major cities in their respective regions.

The rebels, however, had no aircraft and no means of defending against aircraft. Hence the Iraqi army's use of helicopters would doom them. Between March 13 and March 24, Bush issued warnings to Iraq against so using helicopters. But he did nothing to enforce the warnings, and his lieutenants told the press that they were "rhetorical." Finally, on March 27, the New York *Times* reported that Bush, at a meeting with his seven top military and national-security advisers, "reaffirmed" a policy "to let President Saddam Hussein put down rebellions in his country without American intervention."

Bush, it turns out, had made this choice at the urging of "Washington's Arab allies," who did not want to see the "splintering of the country"—i.e., who wanted Iraq's Sunni Arab minority to continue ruling Kurds and Shiites. Over the following days high administration officials told reporters that these wise Arab (and Soviet) allies, backed by the wise CIA, were confident that after the army had reestablished the empire, "someone from Hussein's own group" would do him in. Bush and his advisers seem never to have asked why Saddam would let this happen, or if it did happen, why a successor similar to Saddam would be preferable to a splintered Iraq—or to a democratic Iraq—or why it would be an acceptable result after the expenditure of blood and treasure.**

DURING March and April, by the rule "I slaughter, therefore I am," Saddam restored his authority at home, and some of the regional prestige that he had lost in the military rout. The Republican Guard, having escaped the Americans through no merit of its own, took out its rage on Shiite and Kurdish civilians. They shelled and rolled over them, raped and murdered so genocidally as to send millions fleeing for the nearest border. The borders nearest the Kurds were snowy mountains, where they died at the rate of up to 1,000 per day.

Bush claimed that the Gulf War had been a great moral victory. But Saddam's conspicuous

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* The pattern has been noted by, among others, Xenophon, Livy, and Machiavelli—not the bedside companions of the Bush administration.

** A year later, with Saddam still in power, the Saudis would be giving Bush the opposite advice—to stir the Kurds and the Shiites into revolt yet again, but this time supporting them with air strikes. But neither the Saudis nor their supporters in Washington would be able to explain why the administration should do something under the relatively difficult conditions of 1992 that it had chosen not to do in 1991, when it would have been easy.

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carnage challenged Bush either to acknowledge that his victory had made things worse, or that it had been incomplete and that further military involvement was needed. Bush equivocated: he extended humanitarian aid to the refugees under U.S. military protection, while doing his best to withdraw that protection as soon as he could do so without embarrassing himself before American voters.

As UN "peacekeeping troops" replaced Americans in town after town, the Iraqi secret police would tighten its grip. Within hours, pro-Saddam posters would appear on the walls, and ordinary people would refuse to be seen with reporters. The people of Iraq behaved as if Saddam had won the war.

The Saudi and Kuwaiti governments also did not behave as if America had won. When the U.S. government asked the Saudis to take the lead in eliminating the Arab world's state of war with Israel, they responded by adding another hundred American companies to the list of those whom they boycott for doing business with Israel. The Saudis did cut out their subsidies to the PLO, but they increased their aid to Syria, which used it to buy Scud-C missiles to be aimed at Israel. Then the Saudis cut production of crude oil enough to cause the price to rise roughly to where it had been in August 1990, before Saddam's occupation of Kuwait was challenged. They had to be aggressive on oil and Israel, explained the Saudis, because Saddam had renewed his propaganda to the Arab masses, charging Saudi Arabia with being a tool of the Zionists and the Americans.

Once again, the U.S. government, unwilling to involve itself decisively in the Middle East yet desirous of influence, felt obliged to approve as its surrogates in the region (this time, Syria and Saudi Arabia) adopted policies harmful to the American people. And once again, the government considered criticism of its surrogates to be *in bad taste and lacking in realism.*

"No one," wrote Clausewitz, ought to start a war "without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it." It was good that the U.S. went to war against Iraq, but because George Bush and his team violated Clausewitz's basic rule, they cannot now fully enjoy the fruits of peace. And neither can the rest of us.

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Yeltsin and Us

Martin Malia

Beside the desolate waves stood he,
And charged with mighty thoughts,
stared out. . .

Here shall a city be laid down
In defiance to a haughty neighbor
Here nature has predestined us
To break a window through to Europe. . .

I love thee, work of Peter's hand,
I love thy harmonies severe:
The Neva's imperial flow and strand,
Her embankments of granite sheer.

—ALEXANDER PUSHKIN
The Bronze Horseman, 1833

One must not live in the Kremlin—
Peter's Guard was right—
There all is crawling still with microbes
of ancient hate
Boris's savage fear and all the Ivans' spite
The pride of the self-crowned Impostor—
in place of the people's right.

—ANNA AKHMATOVA
Moon of the Streltsy, 1940

IN THE wake of Russia's August revolution, the comfortable old "center" of perestroika Communism suddenly ceased to hold. In the four months between the party coup and Gorbachev's December resignation, all the basic Soviet institutions—the Congress of People's Deputies, the Plan, the KGB, the Union, indeed the party itself—like the shells of a matryoshka doll, were peeled away in a rush to political self-destruction unparalleled in history. In the place of the most centralized regime of the modern world, there remained only the near-stuctureless Commonwealth of Minsk. But at the core of this post-Soviet disunion, there emerged an independent Russia with its historic white-red-blue banner, under the improvised government of a charismatic President, Boris Yeltsin, who proclaimed a program of "national rebirth."

This raises two questions: what manner of man is Yeltsin? And might he not be the phoenix of traditional Russian autocracy, reborn from the ashes of Leninism?

BOTH Yeltsin and the Russian national tradition have had, until very recently, an almost unanimously bad press in the West. While still in opposition to Communism, Yeltsin was dismissed as a "populist," a "maverick," a "buffoon," an "autocrat," and, by some bureaucrats in Washington, as a "swashbuckling demagogue." After he had come to power, it was a staple of Western commentary to contrast his alleged authoritarianism with the putative democratism of Gorbachev. But this was a strange inversion of reality, since Yeltsin had made his political career as the champion of democracy and the market, while Gorbachev, even after his August captivity, envisaged reform only through the Communist party.

One reason for this bizarre inversion was the extravagance of Western Gorbomania; Yeltsin, after all, was the man who overthrew our friend in the Kremlin. There were many causes of this strange cult of "Gorby." There was, basically, the novelty of a "liberal" Communist who had made substantial concessions to the West. He made these concessions, moreover, in the area that touched us most: namely, nuclear and conventional armaments and the cold war. Then, for governments, there was the convenience of dealing with a single and, by late 1989, predictable, head of a unified state. Finally, for those nostalgic for the popular front, perestroika offered the hope of a "socialism with a human face" that would at last redeem the Soviet experiment before the bar of history.

Accordingly, regret for perestroika was the dominant note of both the Western media and of Western governments when Gorbachev departed, on the day the red flag was struck in the Kremlin. Gorbachev was thanked for having taken the initiative in ending the cold war, something which was roughly true. But he was also hailed for his "vision" in "liberating" both Eastern Europe and his own people from "totalitarianism" by "granting them democracy," all of which was quite false, since he intended no such results. Rather, liberation was wrested from him by such social move-

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ments as Poland's Solidarity, Czechoslovakia's Civic Forum, Lithuania's Sajudis, and the Democratic Russia Movement of Sakharov and Yeltsin, which skillfully expanded the beachhead granted to them by perestroika. Gorbachev's contribution to this liberation was to have had the good sense not to resist the process once it could no longer be stopped without a major use of force—of which the Soviet state was probably incapable anyway. So Gorbachev did, though inadvertently, help rid the world of the Communist specter, and hence relieve the West of a great burden.

Yeltsin, by contrast, could never do us a comparable favor; indeed, from the point of view of Western interests he appeared in some respects as a spoiler. Thus, though he continued, and indeed has deepened, Gorbachev's military concessions, he has been primarily interested in internal not international affairs, and hence has lacked glamor for the Western public. His revolutionary policy of breaking up the Soviet Union has been seen, rightly, as destabilizing, and hence has alarmed foreign governments; and his program of liquidating socialism and building capitalism has turned off the Western Left.

OVER and above these particular causes for Western suspicion of Yeltsin, there has been his unabashed Russianness: he does not talk alluringly about "universal human values" or building a "common European home," as did Gorbachev, but about promoting a "Russian renaissance." And in the West the Russian national tradition evokes an almost Pavlovian response: "despotism" and "chauvinism."

Surely, however, in the late 20th century the danger of stereotyping an entire nation as any one thing or another should require no belaboring. And as for present-day realities, any Russian-speaking visitor to the former Soviet Union will find there far less chauvinism than existed in the United States in the backwash of the Gulf War. What one does find, predominantly, is an urgent effort by the intelligentsia, the media, the political class, and the Orthodox clergy to discover "spiritual values" to fill the void created by the collapse of Communist culture. For Communism was not just a regime; it was a total way of life. Hence, with its disappearance there also disappeared the ethic—mendacious though it was—that gave meaning and purpose to all the now-collapsed institutions of Sovietism.

No society can endure with such an ethical void in its heart. With the spurious internationalism of Communism gone, therefore, the return of the repressed historic and religious tradition of the nation was inevitable—just as it was in Eastern Europe. It was quite unrealistic to expect that some pallid social-democratic universalism would turn out to be the natural heir of a defunct "real socialism."

To be sure, not all of this revived nationalism is reassuring. Vladimir Zhirinovsky, a former presidential candidate, is usually cited as an ominous portent of fascism; and vice president General Alexander Rutskoi is sometimes mentioned as a potential Bonaparte. But Zhirinovsky is quite literally on the lunatic fringe, while Rutskoi's exact political label is "Communist for Democracy," and his allegiance is more to the old Union than to the new Russia. Much more central to the meaning of the current renaissance of Russianness is the distinguished medieval historian and former gulag inmate, Academician Dmitri Likhachev, who is regularly to be seen on television advocating a return to traditional values.

Thus, with Communism self-destroyed, the world is now confronted with Russia *rediviva*. And this revived Russia returns accompanied by some fifteen or twenty other newly emancipated nationalisms, both in the Commonwealth and within the Russian Federation itself, from Ukraine, to Uzbekistan, to Yakutia. Clearly, the time has come for the outside world, particularly in quarters that consistently argued the unviability of Communism, to rethink its attitude toward the Russian national revival, and indeed toward the place of nationalism in the modern world generally.

IT SHOULD first of all be emphasized that there is no one Russian tradition. As in any other country, the national tradition has diverse components, in constant tension with one another as they struggle for possession of the nation's soul. In modern Russia the great divide has been between Slavophiles and Westernizers. But these terms do not designate a national versus a non-national or internationalist party; both groups are thoroughly national, though with differing ideas about the nation's destiny.

Schematically, as the Slavophile position developed in the 1840's and 50's, it meant that Russia possessed a spiritual and communal culture founded on Orthodoxy which was completely distinct from that of the rationalistic, individualistic, and materialistic West. The Westernizers of those decades held that Russia was of the same essence as Europe, though in an earlier, or more "backward," stage of development, and its destiny therefore was to repeat the European pattern in order to realize its own potential.

But this was only the beginning of differentiation in the modern Russian tradition. For the two camps could also loosely be called the Right and the Left; moreover, after the 1850's each mingled with the other and both subdivided internally. We thus had liberal and socialist, constitutionalist and revolutionary Westernizers, just as we had conservative and populist, gentry and socialist Slavophiles. Then there were people who were none of these things, but "Eurasians" or simply apolitical. All of these groups held different attitudes toward the monarchy, and hence divided again into statists and anti-statists. Each group,

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finally, would find a different "usable past," whether 17th-century Muscovy or Peter the Great's Europeanizing enlightened despotism.

Now that the 74-year hiatus in Russian history created by Sovietism has been closed, the whole of this heritage is coming to the surface again, but adapted to post-Soviet conditions. And in this spectrum of values, Yeltsin emerges as one kind of Westernizer. His program is to "liberate Russia from the Communist yoke" (as one would say, "the Mongol yoke"), and so "return her to Europe," as he repeatedly emphasized in his election campaign of last spring. This promise of a civilized and European identity is why a majority of his compatriots elected him; for to them he was already their champion and a hero before he ever climbed up on that tank in August. It is true, as some commentators were overly eager to point out, that the people were also voting against the other, Communist side, since to them the party was a "criminal organization" which, under the cloak of the highest humanistic ideals, had only swindled and plundered the nation. Yet precisely because Yeltsin is the one who gave public voice to this long-suppressed popular grievance, it is hardly appropriate to dismiss his appeal as "populist" or "demagogic."

No doubt, Yeltsin will not be Vaclav Havel in power, the kind of East European dissident with whom present-day Washington is comfortable. He will surely be more like another post-Communist president recently to address a joint session of Congress, Lech Walesa. Somewhat homespun and rough-hewn, he is out of Jacksonian hickory, so to speak, the kind of man-of-the-people in power whom a much earlier Washington appreciated most highly. For he comes out of a Russian log cabin, or *izba*, somewhere on the Urals frontier, which gives his Westernism a tinge of *pochvennichestvo*, or native-soil populism, a tradition at present most prominently represented by Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn. The result of this mix in Yeltsin is a genuine sense of mission to promote "Russia's resurrection" from the destructive fraud of Communism, by modernizing what he would not blush to call his "fatherland."

FATHERLAND, however, is another notion that causes trouble in the contemporary West; Americans in particular are made uneasy by so emotional a term to designate the native hearth and home. Nonetheless, the substance of this notion is not so alien as it might seem: we ourselves have a kindred sense of historic uniqueness, and perhaps an even greater sense of national mission than pre-Communist Russia ever had. Indeed, this country, after having begun at Massachusetts Bay as a "city on a hill," built itself a special capital, named for our Founder—as Rome had allegedly honored Romulus—and dedicated to the Columbian cult of our exemplary new nationhood. This once sleepy Southern town in brick, by the time of the New Deal and World War II, had become an imperial seat in marble, studded with presidential temples dedicated to the religion of the Republic, consecrated for the greater glory of democracy, and so hallowed for the edification of the rest of mankind.

Well, modern Russia, too, has a specially built national city, which has at last recovered its authentic name, St. Petersburg. This capital, too, was improbably erected on a marsh, and laid out according to a geometric, Enlightenment design of Gallic, neoclassical provenance. St. Petersburg had been created *ex nihilo* to replace Russia's old capital, Moscow, scorned by Peter as Asiatic, stagnant, and obscurantist. And so that ancient seat of Mother Russia, with its patriarchal and pious ways, was abandoned to the veneration of future Slavophiles. Or at least this was so until 1918, when the ultra-Westernizing Bolsheviks moved their Red capital into the Kremlin, where, in a perverse turn of fate, they created the ultimate Oriental despotism. This is why the poet Anna Akhmatova, the quintessential Petersburger and the most "Pushkinian" voice of 20th-century Russian literature, could only curse the rage, fear, and hatred harbored within the Kremlin's crenelated cincture.

Experienced Yeltsin-watchers in Moscow claim that Yeltsin shares these sentiments: they have heard him say that the Russian leader he admires most is Peter the Great. For the founder of modern Russia first "cut a window through to Europe," in the famous words from Pushkin's masterpiece, *The Bronze Horseman*. Pushkin, of course, recognized that Peter's revolution cost dearly (the popular saying has it that Peter built his city "on bones"). But the poet's final verdict was that, on balance, Peter's efforts promoted civilization, and, ultimately, humanization in Russia; and this has been the opinion of civilized and forward-looking Russians ever since.

Yet the 20th century is not the 18th. Peter's Europe was Holland for technology, Sweden for arms and state administration, and Versailles for monarchic grandeur. Yeltsin's "Europe" is above all America—for technology, the rule of law, and democratic legitimacy all rolled up in one. For him, this means pluralistic modernization, rather than the military-industrial complex built by Stalin as the "Lenin of today" during the 1930's. Yeltsin, therefore, wishes to liquidate this parasitic monster, which consumes up to 40 percent of the nation's GNP and employs some 30 percent of the labor force, and in its place to give Russia a normal, defensive army of professionals and volunteers. In his view, this sacrifice of Russia's useless superpower status is indispensable to national revival.

Gorbachev, by contrast, sought to the bitter end to preserve the Union, since he derived from a different Westernizing tradition in Russia, Marx-

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ism. As he constantly put it, his allegiance was to the "socialist choice made in October [1917]" and the "Communist perspective." Thus, though he never said so straight out, he aimed to be a kinder, gentler Lenin for our day.

Of course, Lenin was also part of Russia's European connection, but in the lineage of the utilitarian ideologue and utopian socialist, Nikolai Chernyshevsky. This "bilious one," as the peasant socialist Alexander Herzen called him, was the prime exemplar of the "new men" of the 1860's, the radical "sons" whom Turgenev contrasted in a famous dichotomy with their liberal "fathers." His fanatical rationalism was analyzed in Dostoevsky's characters, Raskolnikov and Ivan Karamazov; and his novel, *What Is to be Done?*, gave Lenin the title, and indeed much of the spirit, of the founding charter of Bolshevism. The result was a fantasy of Reason-in-Power that mesmerized the entire 20th century, both East and West.

Yet the Marxist-Leninist variant of Westernism in turn divided; for the Red Founder left two legacies, the War Communism of 1918-21, and the pseudo-mixed, quasi-market economy of the New Economic Policy of the 1920's. Stalin had built the Soviet Union on the first legacy; Gorbachev made the second the model for his perestroika. His intention was to give the system a more human and efficient face, and so salvage the whole Leninist enterprise. But the result was economic disaster and the great collapse of August-December 1991.

Thus, Lenin in both his guises turned out to be a False Founder; and it is only fitting that Soviet power should have taken as its central symbol his mummy and his mausoleum. Russia's "rebirth," therefore, means reverting from Leningrad to the true national foundation of Petersburg.

For Yeltsin, the way back to Petersburg led first through a willingness to confront socialism directly; and here he was a pioneer among the democrats. Because of socialist industrialization he had left his peasant *izba* for the Polytechnic Institute of Sverdlovsk to become an engineer.* He then entered the great Urals Machinery Plant (Uralmash), and worked in its various branches before becoming manager at the age of thirty-two. In all this he was quite unlike another son of "de-kulakized" peasants, Gorbachev. The latter began his career at age twenty by entering the Communist party and becoming a full-time worker in the Komsomol, or Communist Youth Organization, the royal Leninist road to a lifetime career as party apparatchik.

Yeltsin, on the other hand, joined the party only at age thirty, because such were the imperatives of making even a nonpolitical career under "real socialism." He became party First Secretary in Sverdlovsk in 1976 largely because, given the totalitarian subordination of the economy to the party, political power was necessary to achieve economic and social results. But, like most ex-Soviets, he also had a phase, in middle life, as a true-believer in the system.

It was because of these qualities that Gorbachev brought him to head the Moscow city apparat in 1986. There, the next year, Yeltsin discovered his political destiny. His efforts to reform the system convinced him that it was not, in fact, reformable; so at a closed Central Committee Plenum in October 1987 he attacked both Yegor Ligachev's protectiveness toward the apparat and Gorbachev's timidity in confronting it. As a result he was deprived of his party posts and sent into the wilderness in an old-fashioned Communist heresy trial, with Gorbachev presiding. For the next two years he was vilified in the party press without any right of reply. He thereby became a martyr in the eyes of the people, and thus also a man whom they could trust, a moral position that he shared only with Andrei Sakharov among the "democrats," who emerged as a national movement from the Congress of People's Deputies in 1989.

His ordeal at the party's hands also gave him a program for saving Russia from Leninism. Convinced that the half-measures of perestroika would not work, he saw that what was needed was a completely "new deal"; and the platform for this he derived by negative extrapolation from the existing national disaster. Since that disaster was caused by socialism, planning, and party dictatorship, the remedy had to be non-socialism, non-planning, and non-dictatorship; or in plain, Western language, capitalism, the market, and democracy.

It was on the basis of this practical program, in combination with authentic charismatic stature, that after 1989 Yeltsin was able to mount a democratic challenge to perestroika, to Gorbachev, and to the system as such. He did this by exploiting the possibilities offered by the semi-rigged elections and pseudo-constitution introduced by Gorbachev in 1989. In that year Yeltsin won as deputy-at-large from Moscow with some 90 percent of the city's vote, and the next year, in 1990, he scored a similar victory as Russian Republic deputy from Sverdlovsk. He then took a leaf from Gorbachev's book and sought election as chairman, or "president," of that body's presidium. In a veritable *tour de force*, he achieved this goal, though by a margin of only four votes, in the teeth of Gorbachev's open opposition and in a Russian parliament with a Communist plurality.

Yeltsin next took a leaf from Poland's Solidarity, which had just then come to power, and adopted the idea of a "shock-therapy" transition to the market. This, by the summer of 1990, had become the 500-Day Plan of Stanislav Shatalin and Grigory Yavlinsky. Finally, he took a leaf from the Lithuanians, and imitated their parliamentary

* See John Morrison's excellent biography, *Boris Yeltsin: From Bolshevik to Democrat* (Dutton, 1991).

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vote for independence in March so as to produce a Russian parliament vote for Republic sovereignty in June; and this triggered a chain reaction of like declarations in other republics, ending in the de-facto dissolution of the Soviet pseudo-Union.

The great anti-Communist surge of 1990 produced the Communist counteroffensive of the fall and winter 1990-91. The high point of the campaign was a March effort by the party to impeach Yeltsin in the Russian parliament. This he defeated with the aid of striking miners in Siberia and several hundred thousand people in the streets of Moscow. Riding the momentum, he dared to do what the apparatchik Gorbachev had conspicuously refused to do: he persuaded his parliament to organize Russian presidential elections for June 1991 by direct, universal suffrage. He won surprisingly easily against four other candidates, on the first round and by 56 percent, thus giving himself and the Russian democratic movement a popular mandate that Gorbachev and the Communist system now transparently lacked.

With the strength of this legitimacy, in August he defeated what most Americans think of as a coup but which was in fact an act of the Soviet government to depose its "President": it had had enough of that eternally vacillating figure, and wanted a "state of emergency" to end "disorder" and suppress the democrats. Yeltsin not only fought off this putsch, but transformed it into a revolutionary counterthrust that at last, after 74 years, succeeded in breaking the hold of Communism over Russia.

All of this represents political talent of a high order. All of it, moreover, was done in the cause of political, and indeed ethical, values that are in the best Western tradition, values that are called, in one word, "democracy." Not just "capitalism," as both hard-line socialists and Chicago economists might say, but "democracy."

YET how does all this fit with the Russian national tradition, which in the past has had precious little to do with democracy, at least in Western eyes? In fact, foreign eyes are somewhat dim in this respect: the Russian tradition since the Great Reforms of Alexander II in the 1860's, and especially after the creation of a legislative Duma in 1905, *did* have a constitutionalist component—alongside the revolutionary one that eventually won out amid the chaos of 1917. But this is not the main point here.

The real issue in present-day discussions of national sentiment is that World War II, by its exceptional viciousness, compromised the national idea everywhere in the Western world. Nationalism now remains respectable, and is held to be potentially democratic, only in the third world. Thus, the national-liberation explosions in Eastern Europe in 1989, and in the former Soviet Union now, have been viewed as much with suspicion as with satisfaction.

This is in marked contrast with the previous tradition of the modern West, in which nationalism, liberalism, and democracy were indissolubly joined together. Such was the case with the Latin American liberation movement of the 1810's-20's, an effort shielded by America's Monroe Doctrine. It was also true of the "Springtime of the Peoples" in the European Revolutions of 1848. And it was just as true of Woodrow Wilson's celebration of national self-determination in his "Fourteen Points" of 1918—not to mention FDR's 1945 vision of a United Nations of independent, post-colonial peoples.

To be sure, recent conflicts in Yugoslavia and Georgia—and quite possibly others yet to come in the post-Communist world—indicate that national springtimes can lead to bitter autumns. But so, too, can "proletarian internationalism"; let us not forget that Soviet soldiers were sent to ravage Afghanistan, and to die there themselves, as a fulfillment of their "internationalist duty." Indeed, internationalism was invoked throughout the whole bloody Soviet experiment in "building socialism," from 1917 onward.

But the real point of this double-entry political bookkeeping is that in a pluralistic world there exists a legitimate sphere between the individual with his unalienable rights and the universal human family. This middle sphere, under modern conditions, is no longer the classical city-state, the *polis* or the *civitas*; it is the democratic nation-state, born of the American and the French Revolutions, and since imitated around the globe.

In the modern world, unlike in the legally hierarchical polities of the old regime, with its "estates" and "orders," democracy and nationalism are two faces of the same unitary community. For when all the monarch's subjects are transformed into equal citizens, a uniform bloc or mass is created. To this new commonweal the late 18th century first affixed the ordinary Roman term for a people or tribe—"*natio*"—and gave it the contemporary meaning of a national community founded on popular sovereignty. There can be no modern democracy without nationalism.

To this new entity the old Roman word, *patria*, or fatherland, in the sense that yields the term "patriotism," is also applicable today. It is the same sense in which Yeltsin uses the word "*otechestvo*," or fatherland. It is the sense in which Russians apply "*otechestvenny*" to the wars of 1812 and 1941-45, since both were viewed by the people, not just by the state, as efforts of the whole community. Indeed, Yeltsin, in referring to his constituents, never uses the word *russkiye*, which denotes the ethnic-linguistic group, but *rossiyane*, which means citizens of the Russian Republic, just as he always uses the ethnically neutral word *rossiiskaya* to describe that federation. This is a civic, not a nativist, patriotism, and a country

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which calls itself by the lusterless name of the United States of a particular continent should not have too much difficulty understanding it.

So much for the ideal of modern patriotism. The reality of democratic equality, of course, brings its special risks and dangers. It is wisdom as old as Aristotle that democracy is prone to degeneration into demagoguery and despotism. In a democracy, moreover, universal suffrage logically entails universal military service, unlike in the old regime with its small armies of noble officers and mercenary soldiers. Thus, in 1792, to the martial republican strains of the *Marseillaise*, the citizen-soldier reappeared on the Western scene for the first time since antiquity, though now *en masse*. The next time that he came marching in it was to the vengeful tones of the *Battle Hymn of the Republic*. Modern warfare has been the bloodiest in history, not just because of advanced technology, but also because of mass, democratic armies.

Nevertheless, legitimate democratic patriotism is as much a part of the natural order of modernity as are the market and private property. When this natural patriotism is denied, its place is often usurped by that brand known as the "last refuge of the scoundrel." In the Russian case, the scoundrel has been Pamyat.

PAMYAT first gained a toehold because the ideological stance of the Communist regime was a fraudulent "proletarian internationalism" that let genuine national sentiment go begging. Russian national sentiment, furthermore, unlike that of the other republics, was not accorded even a bogus "socialist" expression, neither a republic Communist party nor a separate Academy of Sciences. Instead, Russia's language and culture were usurped and denatured by the party-state as an instrumental *lingua franca* for "building socialism" and for welding together the "Union." But this Soviet entity was not a Russian empire; it was a party empire which oppressed all nationalities equally. Indeed, the Russian Republic, though the richest in the Union, had a lower standard of living than the others because of its northern climate and remoteness from the main food supplies. So the ostensibly imperial nation considered itself exploited by what the West regarded as Russia's colonies.

But Russia felt exploited in still a deeper sense, because of its unique relation to the Soviet experience. The Communist Revolution of October 1917 was not a revolution of the whole Russian empire, but of a minority in its Great Russian lands only; and the Bolsheviks then used this base to conquer most of the remaining territory of the defunct czarist state. Similarly, the victory in World War II was not a victory of the whole Soviet Union, it was essentially a Russian victory in a war largely fought under Russian national symbols. But in neither case was the struggle waged for Russian national interests; in both cases, the internationalist party was exploiting Russian national sentiment to further the cause of "socialism," which was the same as the cause of its own power.

Hence, for Russians the present liberation from Communism has a special poignancy: they are doing for their totalitarianism what Germans and Japanese required foreign armies to accomplish for theirs. This gives the Russian democrats, as the victors of August are called, a special sense of reborn national dignity that fully deserves the term patriotism in its original sense.

Given the complex relationship between Russian national sentiment and Sovietism, a relationship which amounted to auto-occupation, the KGB saw fit to sponsor Pamyat as a safety valve that it could also control. At the same time, Pamyat's extravagance prevented it from becoming respectable in Russia, and also suggested to foreigners that the enlightened Communism of perestroika was necessary to keep the Russian chauvinist beast at bay. Once Yeltsin entered the lists, however, Pamyat and the chauvininsts were kept "alive" only by the official party press and the KGB—as well as by echoing answers in some of the Western press. In fact, in all the Russian elections, both national and local, since 1989, Pamyat never once elected a candidate, or garnered as many as 10,000 votes.

One of Yeltsin's services to his country, and to the world, was to wrest the national banner from genuine chauvinists, and so make the traditional Russian tricolor respectable—just as the Balts had done before him for their banners. This is why Yeltsin was the first Russian leader publicly to defend Baltic independence, as early as 1989; and why he flew to the Baltic region in January 1990, when Gorbachev's KGB attacked its citizens to preserve the "Union." Nor does the sad case of the despotic Zviad Gamsakhurdia in Georgia invalidate the national principle any more than Huey Long's demagoguery invalidated democracy.

In fact, nationalism has on the whole strengthened democracy in the ex-Communist world—as it did in 1918, 1848, 1810, or indeed 1776, in the West. For when alien power denies the popular will, national liberation becomes the key to liberty *tout court*. And true liberty is taken, not given. Thus, the revolt of Eastern Europe, then of the Soviet border republics against the "center," was the cutting edge of anti-Communism in general; and it was the Russian sovereignty movement that finished Communism off.

IT IS thanks to Yeltsin's liberal-democratic patriotism that the largest ex-Soviet republic is not now in the way of becoming like Slobodan Milosevic's Serbia in ex-Yugoslavia. There, a Communism in its death throes appropriated the national cause in a cynical bid for survival. It could make a powerful bid indeed,

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because it controlled the army. But the Soviet army is still under the control of Yeltsin appointees, and it remains dominated by younger officers who voted heavily for him in June 1991.

The Balkan type of post-Communism is best called "national Bolshevism." It is this phenomenon, not some atavistic propensity to "interethnic strife," that is the real danger in the present exit from Communism. Where such strife exists, it is because there are real grievances, created or at least exacerbated by artificial Stalinist borders drawn in a spirit of "divide and rule." Such strife will abate only when its causes have been addressed through provision for local autonomy and minority rights within each ex-Soviet republic.

The record of Yeltsin's Russian Federation on this score has so far been encouraging. Right after the August coup, his press secretary issued a statement that if other republics declared their independence, Russia might demand border revisions. Widely criticized at the time as a threat to Ukraine, where some twelve million Russians live, this declaration is in fact best read as a hastily improvised warning to all of the republics that the issue of national minorities is a potentially lethal one to be handled with the greatest caution. Yeltsin, after all, had been consistent in his support for the independence of the Baltic states, where there is also a large Russian minority; and he has just as consistently collaborated with President Nursultan Nazarbayev of the artificial and fragile entity of Kazakhstan, where 40 percent of the population is Russian. Finally, unlike Gorbachev, he anticipated Ukraine's vote for independence on December 1, and so could accommodate it a few days later by the creation of the Commonwealth.

It is, indeed, amazing that the government of a Russian state should be willing to let go, without resistance, of almost half the population of the old Soviet Union, including such traditionally imperial Russian lands as Ukraine, Belarus, and the Crimea. It is equally amazing that the Russian heir of the late Soviet superpower should be asking the surviving American superpower to help it dismantle its nuclear installations and convert its military-industrial complex. There is no example in European, or for that matter world, history of such an abdication of national grandeur. Under such circumstances, it is wholly incongruous to speak of the post-Soviet Commonwealth as a permutation of Great Russian chauvinism, or of Yeltsin as some new model autocrat, when he is desperately juggling the other eleven Commonwealth states and his fragmenting ex-Soviet army so as to keep trouble to a minimum.

In significant measure, ethnic conflicts have assumed their present acute form in the ex-Soviet Union because of the catastrophic economic conditions now prevailing in all the republics. What can a would-be "Petrine" Yeltsin do with this, the greatest post-Soviet conundrum of all?

In fact, he has already done it; or at least he has done what was possible in the few months that the democrats have been in power. The first and most important step was taken in the course of last autumn with the dissolution of the Communist party and the dismantling of its Union-wide apparat. By abolishing Communism, the Russian democrats have gone beyond Gorbachev's perestroika reformism and made a revolution. It was Communism, by its very existence—not some failure of "reformist" will—that was the impediment to economic revival because of the system's institutional refusal of the market and private property.

For the economy under Sovietism was not an autonomous and self-regulating sphere of activity, as in the West, but part of a total system, in which everything was politicized under what the Russians called the "command-administrative system" of the omnipresent party. And as the experience of the East European revolutions of 1989 first demonstrated, the revolutionary destruction of Communism's political hegemony was the indispensable prerequisite to economic transformation. Until that was accomplished, any Leninist system was simply buying time.

To replace this defunct system, last November Yeltsin installed a new government of economic young-bloods, with an average age of around thirty-five, under the leadership of Yegor Gaidar, to carry out a "shock-therapy" program of marketization and privatization. These "kids in Reeboks," as they are called by their displaced Gosplan elders, mean business, in both senses of that word. Genuine economists and not socialist "political economists," ideologically they incline to monetarism and Thatcherism; but above all they are guided by a pragmatic revulsion against Soviet planning. Their program is already being put into effect in ad-hoc fashion: "big-bang" price liberalization, privatization of retail outlets, decollectivization of agriculture, opening the country to foreign investment, and an attempt at currency stabilization.

To be sure, the program is imperfect, and its execution is often halting; but the hour is late, and there was no time to refine matters further. What more do responsible figures in Washington need to see that they at last have a government in Moscow they can really do business with (to appropriate Mrs. Thatcher's premature phraseology)?

The Russian economic catastrophe has been compared with the Great Depression in America, but doubled; for the drop in the ex-USSR's GNP for 1991 was some 13 to 15 percent, while in the worst years of the American Depression it was 9 percent. Yet even these stark

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figures do not do justice to reality. The country's infrastructure and its capital stock alike are literally, physically crumbling into rubble, a condition closer to post-World War II Germany and Japan than to NRA and WPA America.

Nevertheless, the Westernizer Yeltsin might still look to New Deal America for inspiration, and to the great 100-day improvisation of 1933. And we too might look back, the better to understand the political exigencies of epochal crisis. There we would find the patrician populism of FDR, with ample decree power voted by a panicked and docile Congress, and wielded by a brain-trust from liberal academia. Yet even these exceptional powers did not prove to be enough: FDR's charismatic leadership still needed a then-paraconstitutional four terms to bring the country out of what was the greatest national trauma in our history since the Civil War.

Russia's trauma on its exit from Communism is as great as that created by the civil war of 1918-20 which first ushered in Communism. After seven decades of lobotomizing Leninism, the post-Soviet world must build both democracy and a modern market economy from scratch. In such a situation strong executive authority is as inevitable in Russia as it would be in any other country. Thus, Yeltsin is now in direct charge of the Russian cabinet with decree power over the crisis area of the economy—an unused prerogative of Gorbachev before August. But unlike Gorbachev, he is there as an elected, accountable President, who has declared that he will step down after a year if his program has not begun to produce results. Since that program replicates our own national values, we clearly have a major stake in his success—especially since it was our policy of containment that made possible Russia's return to the West.

And so, for the historically unprecedented endeavor that lies ahead, the kinder, gentler Bronze Horseman now leading the fragile Russian Republic has an equivalent mandate, as good a brain-trust, and much more of a program than did the founder of modern America in 1932. Surely, he deserves less of a raw deal than he has so far received in the fatherland of the New Deal—and within the pillared cincture of our own White House.

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Regarding Daughters and Sisters

The Rape of Dinah

Leon R. Kass

Dedicated to my daughter, Sarah Kass, with special thanks for her invaluable insights into both the story and its subject.

EVER since I was a boy, long before I had a wife and daughters, I have always thought and keenly felt that rape is a capital offense, a crime worse even than murder. For the rapist, says the book of Deuteronomy, "death by stoning." It has never seemed to me too cruel or excessive a punishment.

No one taught me to feel this way; indeed, I am sure I never discussed such topics with anyone until well after I was a family man. Though it seems incredible in these shameless times, nice people 40 or even 30 years ago did not talk much about sex in any form, let alone chatter away in lurid detail about rape, incest, or sodomy. A certain decorousness prevailed, both in deed and in speech, at the center of which was a high regard for womanly modesty, itself an inarticulate yet profound tribute to the awesome procreative power central to the silent mystery of womanliness. Paradoxically, the very sense of shame that inhibited explicit speech about sex silently taught us the enormity of the crime of rape.

What exactly is the crime, and why is it so heinous? According to Blackstone's *Commentaries*, rape is defined as "carnal knowledge of a woman forcibly and against her will." Thus, the crime against the woman has three elements: sexual intercourse; the use (or threat) of force; her unwillingness. Accordingly, there are three coincident "offenses": one against her specifically female sexual nature; one against her bodily integrity; one against her will. Traditionally, our understanding of the crime focused largely on the first. Rape, though it involves the use of force and is always against the will, is not—either in common law or in common sense—just a special case of assault and battery. It is a *sexual* crime, a violation of a woman's sexual (and therefore *generative*) nature. The purity of woman's sexual being—and, therewith, also the purity of marriage and the clarity of lineage—was the primary concern of the law, as it was of sexual morality in general.

In Roman law, according to Blackstone,

> stealing a woman from her parents or guardians, and debauching her, is equally penal by the emperor's edict, whether she consent or is forced. . . . And this, in order to take away from women every opportunity of offending in this way; whom the Roman law supposes never to go astray, without the seduction and arts of the other sex; and therefore by restraining and making so highly penal the solicitations of the men, they meant to secure effectually the honor of the women.

It was English common law that introduced an emphasis on lack of consent, yet not because it came to regard rape as a crime against the will, but for reasons of fairness and prudence:

> But our English law does not entertain quite such sublime ideas of the honor of either sex, as to lay the blame of a mutual fault on one of the transgressors only: and therefore, makes it a necessary ingredient in the crime of rape, that it must be against the woman's will.

And whereas the Roman law did not recognize the rape of a prostitute or common harlot, "not allowing any punishment for violating the chastity of her, who hath indeed no chastity at all, or at least hath no regard to it," the law of England—still concerned with chastity but more willing to allow for personal reform—"holds it to be felony to force even a concubine or harlot; because the woman may have forsaken that unlawful course of life."

By contrast, today's discussions of rape, largely led by feminist critics of this allegedly patriarchal tradition of law and sexual morality, focus almost exclusively on the absence of the woman's clear consent. Rape is regarded primarily as a violation of the will, not a violation of womanliness. To be sure, we still distinguish rape from other forms of unconsented touching. But since the entire view

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of relations between the sexes is increasingly seen solely through the lens of power, rape is viewed merely as a most egregious example of the generalized male tendency to dominate and violate women. It follows that the remedy is female empowerment rather than womanly shame and gentlemanly respect; karate lessons and campaigns to "take back the night" rather than a restoration of a proper regard for the deeper meanings of sexuality, love, and intimacy. The empowered woman can have it all: sexual freedom without any risks or dangers. From men she no longer wants or needs the righteous indignation and the courage that will defend a lady's (or a sister's or a daughter's) honor, but simply a willingness to let "no" mean "no."

What should thoughtful students of human affairs, both male and female, think about this new dispensation? Does it properly understand the meaning of rape? Does it offer an effective strategy to prevent it? Does it properly understand the meaning of our sexuality? Does it counsel well about how we should educate and care for daughters and sisters in these matters? To help us consider these questions, let us examine one of our tradition's oldest stories about rape and about fathers and daughters, brothers and sisters: the biblical tale of the rape of Dinah, daughter of Jacob and Leah.

THE story of the rape of Dinah (Genesis 34) is remarkable in many ways, and not only because (as the commentator in the Soncino edition of the Pentateuch remarks) it is "an exception to the series of peaceful scenes from patriarchal life and character—a tale of dishonor, wild revenge, and indiscriminate slaughter." It is one of the few stories in Genesis about a woman, and the only one about a daughter and a sister. Only in this story can we see how the founders of Israel regard and treat a daughter: for Dinah is the only daughter born to the patriarchs, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Only in this story can we see how young Israelites regard and treat a sister: for Dinah has brothers galore who unite to defend her honor. Indeed, the brothers' response comprises nearly the whole of the tale; the bulk of the account reports how they plot and execute revenge on the entire manhood of the city of Shechem. By thus exploring relations between the Israelites and their neighbors—including prospects for peaceful coexistence or enmity, for separateness or intermarriage—the story also raises questions regarding the chances for the long-term survival and integrity of the people of the covenant.

Why are all these matters presented in one story? Why make the one tale about daughters the story of a rape? Why merge the personal story of a rape with the political question of foreign relations? Is the story of the rape merely incidental, serving mainly as a vehicle for launching (and exploring) the political confrontation between Israel and its neighbors? Are relations among nations best explored by considering controversies over women? Or, conversely, does the political context of the story illuminate also the very *meaning* of rape? Could it be that rape, though a horrible personal crime, is finally intelligible only culturally and politically? Can one best read the character of a people in how they respond to rape in particular and to the dignity of women in general? Does this story point to the distinctive view of woman that will come to characterize the way of Israel?

The story which provokes these questions does not explicitly answer them. In the book of Genesis, the author does not go in for direct moralizing; the voice of the (textual) narrator rarely pronounces judgment. (One exception: "Thus did Esau despise his birthright.") And we must not accept as authoritative a judgment rendered by any one character, no matter how worthy. The stories are supposed to speak for themselves; they "teach," but not directly or didactically. Thus they invite thought and require interpretation and judgment. Their meaning must be sought in light of the textual context and the special circumstances in which the characters find themselves, and we must be careful not to project onto the text our current prejudices: things which strike *us* as harsh or immoral may not in fact be so, at least under the circumstances. At the same time, necessity does not simply justify: even where circumstances require harsh or cruel conduct, that conduct is not simply accepted. Throughout Genesis, the moral ambiguity of human actions—and its lasting effects—is vividly portrayed, rarely more powerfully than in the present tale.

OUR story interrupts a series of remarkable successes for the house of Jacob. Returning to Canaan from Paddan-Aram after having made peace with Laban, his household intact and rich in cattle, Jacob has just achieved two great triumphs: he has successfully wrestled the man-angel, winning a blessing and gaining a new name; and he has accomplished a peaceful reunion with his brother Esau, who (it seems to us) was willing to abandon a twenty-year-old grudge. Made wiser, through his adventures, regarding the ways of man and God, and reminded by his limp of his encounter with the divine, Jacob appears ready to settle down and to allow his now swollen tribe to cross the threshold into nationhood. He builds a house in Succoth, the first immobile dwelling of the patriarchs. He makes booths for his cattle. He then buys land from the ruler of Shechem, the first purchase of land other than the cave which Abraham had purchased for the limited purpose of burial. Jacob establishes himself in the promised land.

Though his conduct is certainly understandable, hindsight reveals it to be unwise. Very likely,

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Jacob's successes have gone to his head. His conflicts with Laban are past; he has escaped a fratricidal encounter with Esau; his rivalrous wives are not making trouble; his beloved Rachel has at last borne a son; he has returned to Canaan a prosperous man. He thinks everything is now settled, so he settles. He deliberately encamps "before the city"—literally *in-the-face-of* the city—of Shechem, a move that we readers should regard with apprehension, given what we have learned about the character of cities. Jacob does not return to Beth-El (cf. 28:20-22; 31:13), from whence he left promising to return, and to which God will send him in the sequel; instead, he takes up a place among—in the face of—the nations of Canaan.

Upon purchasing the land he erects there an altar which he calls *El-Elohe-Israel*, "God, the God of Israel." Pious readers may take this to be Jacob's profession of monotheism and his faith in the one true God; but, in the context, it could rather express an anxious appeal to his own *personal* deity (for "Israel" here means only Jacob), a deity whose assistance he will need now that he is settling among strangers, people with different ways and *other* gods.[1] In the immediate sequel, an unexpected encounter with these Canaanite neighbors straightaway upsets the peace and exposes the foolishness—or at least the insufficiency—of Jacob's plans.

DINAH initiates the encounter: "And Dinah, the daughter of Leah, whom she had borne unto Jacob, went out to see the daughters of the land." This is all that Dinah did, and all we know about it. Yet it is not difficult to understand her intentions and to guess at her motives. One daughter among eleven sons, she may well have been lonely and eager for female company; it is the *daughters* of the land she goes out to see. Alternatively, she may have been curious, attracted not by similarity but by difference, the difference between "the daughter *of Leah*" and "the daughters *of the land*"; this would not be the first time in Genesis that we meet a woman who is curious and who finds "outside" matters attractive, "a delight to the eyes" (cf. 3:6).

It seems that Dinah does not go merely to see, in detached beholding, but rather to visit: in Hebrew idiom, "to see, to look upon" means "to make friendship with." Perhaps she wishes to join with the daughters in matters of seeing: to see "*and be seen*" adds the Samaritan text. For how else might a single young woman, living at home in a houseful of men, ever come to the notice of prospective suitors? Her mother,[2] after all, could have taught her, from painful experience, what it meant to be passed over and unloved. And from her father's less than equal regard for her mother and his clear preference for the more beautiful Rachel, Dinah might well have concluded that it is only good looks and being seen that truly count.

The text leaves Dinah's motives unclear, as motives often are in such matters. But, more likely, the text is not interested in motives, but rather in the action itself and its meaning. For Dinah's deed has a meaning quite apart from her intention, a meaning of which she was likely entirely innocent. Whatever her motive, she did indeed "go out" and she did indeed go "to see." She left the home—and the customs and ways—of her mother and father, under the aegis of *El-Elohe-Israel*, and went *out* into alien territory. She went out *alone*, without security, perhaps even without permission. She went to *town*, to the city, never—not even today—a safe place for an innocent, attractive, unprotected, and vulnerable young woman. And, willy-nilly, in going *to see* she would necessarily look upon—and be initiated into—ways that were not her own, as happens to every young person who goes abroad (or even off to college) "to see for myself." Actions taken in innocence are often far from innocent.

This is not to blame the victim: Dinah would be culpable only if these were her intentions or if she went against advice and with foreknowledge of the dangers. If blame is to be meted out, it should go instead to Jacob. For Jacob knows from personal experience what can happen to a man confronted with a beautiful woman: it was he, a stranger in a strange land, who defied men's customs (at the well) to be alone with Rachel (29:7); it was he who lost his wits and forgot to make a contract with Laban for Rachel, so infatuated was he with her beauty; it was he, lusting or perhaps just drunk on his wedding night, who did not even recognize the substitution of Leah for his beloved Rachel. Shrewd and wise in the ways of the world, Jacob certainly should have taken precautions to instruct and protect his daughter—unless, of course, he was lulled into a false sense of security by his many recent successes and by his peaceful real-estate transactions with the ruling house of the town, or, worse, unless he had not yet learned *that* and *how* one must care for daughters. Just as Abraham needed help learning the importance and meaning of "wife"—one cannot innocently pass her off as one's sister—so Jacob (and, through him, we readers) must learn, painfully, the importance and meaning of "daughter."

Dinah went out to see the daughters. But it was she who was seen, and not by daughters: "And saw

[1] Jacob has forgotten the pillar he had anointed in Beth-El, and his vow that "this stone, which I have set up as a pillar, shall be God's house; and of all that Thou shalt give me I will surely give the tenth unto Thee" (28:22).

[2] The 11th-century commentator Rashi here makes much of the connection of Dinah to her mother: "The daughter of Leah—so Scripture calls her; why not the daughter of Jacob? But just because she 'went out' she is called Leah's daughter, since she too was fond of 'going out' [Midrash Genesis Rabbah, 80], as it is said [30:16], 'and Leah went out to meet him.' With an allusion to her they formulated the proverb: 'Like mother, like daughter.'"

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her Shechem the son of Hamor the Hivite, the prince of the land, and he took her and he lay with her and he defiled her." Dinah was seen by Shechem, the prince of Shechem, the leading young Shechemite, the first and finest young man in the town. The coincidence of the name of man and town announces that this is the paradigmatic encounter between these two "cultures" (much like the story of the sons of God and the daughters of men; 6:2). Without a word, immediately upon seeing Dinah, Shechem took, lay with, and defiled—or "humbled" or "abased" (*'anâh*, "to put down, to depress")—her. He had complete power over her, and he exercised it. About Dinah's response the text is silent. The brute fact is all we are asked to see: Dinah was raped.

Dinah's defilement will haunt us throughout; but it makes no difference to Shechem, who now finds that "his soul did cleave to Dinah the daughter of Jacob, and he loved the damsel, and he spoke to the heart of the damsel [*na'arâh*, a girl from infancy to adolescence: damsel, maiden]." We may, if we wish, take at face value Shechem's professed love for Dinah. But we know how readily some men rationalize their lusts, how a woman they found "good in bed" suddenly seems lovable, how a man sweet-talks a woman into accepting his aggressive advances—even to reassure her, his lust now being sated, after he has raped her. Her abasement means nothing; new love will conquer all. True, she needs comforting; but, says he to himself, speech to the heart will overcome her regret or sorrow.[3] Defilement is just a state of mind, alterable by a change of heart. While sweet-talking the damsel, Shechem tells his father to *get him* this girl for a wife, and his father, the ruling prince Hamor, will oblige.

TO DEFEND Shechem's conduct, the reader can appeal only to cultural relativity. Predatory behavior—"take first, ask later"—seems to be the customary way of the Shechemites; the ruling prince does not upbraid his son for rape. The desire to make an "honest woman" of Dinah, now that he loves her, seems to be all that is needed to make prior abasement and defilement null and void. Woman is for the ravishing.

Not so in the house of Jacob. As Hamor goes out to gain his son's desire, Jacob hears and concentrates only on his daughter's defilement (a new word: *tâmê*, to be foul, contaminated, polluted, unclean). But as his sons are in the field with his cattle, he bides his time, awaiting their return. Jacob's silence has long puzzled readers, because of what we know of his previous energy, resourcefulness, and shrewdness. Perhaps, Robert Sacks suggests,

> Jacob, who dealt successfully with his brother when facing the problems of an earlier generation, decided not to intervene in the present affair. The relation between Israel and its neighbors once a house had been built became the problems of another generation. Therefore he remained silent and waited for Dinah's brothers to arrive.[4]

But we must also consider the possibility that Jacob was thoroughly nonplussed, astonished at what had occurred, guilty over his own failure to prevent it, overwhelmed by sadness at the pollution of his household, or unsure of what one must do under such circumstances. No one he knew had faced the question of daughters before.[5] Whatever the reason, Jacob holds his peace until the sons return.

What began as an interpersonal matter between a prince and a damsel now quickly becomes a political issue between peoples. But the interests, concerns, and attitudes of the two sides differ sharply. The Hivite ruler and his son are eager to obtain Dinah as Shechem's wife; Jacob and his sons are preoccupied with her defilement. As soon as they hear the news, Jacob's sons return from the fields, grieved and very angry, as the narrator reports, "because he had done a vile deed in Israel in lying with Jacob's daughter which thing ought not to be done" (34:7). Though laws against rape had not yet been explicitly promulgated, not even among the Israelites, the sons intuitively understood it as an immoral, even a heinous, deed. What is more, they took it as an outrage not only against Dinah but against the entire clan and its ways.

Indeed, one might even say that the clan here acts to define itself: we are a community which unites to defend a woman's honor. This first action of Israel's (Jacob's) sons, to avenge a vile deed committed against Israel's daughter, gives birth to the *people* of Israel, now defined morally and politically, and no longer merely genealogically and economically. This moral-political unification of an otherwise potentially fractious and rivalrous band of men may be what Jacob shrewdly had in mind when he waited for his sons to return before responding.

UNIFICATION in the face of a common enemy is the oldest political story. There are even famous accounts of such political self-definition in defense of women and to avenge

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[3] Rashi reads similarly: he spoke "words that would appeal to her heart: see how much money your father has lavished for a small plot of field. I will marry you and you will then possess the city and all its fields."

[4] "The Lion and the Ass: A Commentary on the Book of Genesis (Chapters 31-34)," *Interpretation*, January 1983.

[5] This is not quite true. His father-in-law, Laban, had shown him a certain high-handed way with daughters, substituting the elder, Leah, for the younger, Rachel, in what Jacob thought was his marriage to Rachel. Having lain with Leah, Jacob was then compelled to marry her, and she later bore him Dinah. Jacob, who—according to Laban—had tried to ignore local customs regarding marriageable daughters, was unwittingly and unwillingly trapped into a "shotgun marriage." The sins of the fathers are sometimes visited also on the daughters.

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a rape. The Trojan war united the Achaians, who fought to avenge the rape of Helen by Paris while he was the guest of her husband Menelaus. But many other cultures do not take rape this seriously.

The ancient Persians, in justifying themselves for their invasion of Greece, blame the war on the Greeks and the revenge they took for Helen. Herodotus presents their reasons:

> "It is the work of unjust men, we think, to carry off women at all; but once they have been carried off, to take seriously the avenging of them is the part of fools, as it is the part of sensible men to pay no heed to the matter; clearly, the women would not have been carried off had they no mind to be." The Persians say that they, for their part, made no account of the women carried off from Asia but that the Greeks, because of a Lacedaemonian woman [i.e., Helen], gathered a great army, came straight to Asia, and destroyed the power of Persia, and from that time forth the Persians regarded the Greek people as their foes.

On closer inspection, the grounds of Greek and Israelite collective action appear to differ significantly. In the Trojan war the crime avenged was understood to be a crime against hosts and hospitality; it is a perversion of hospitality to take the wife of one's host. In avenging the rape of Dinah, the sons of Israel regard it as a crime against the maiden herself. This concern with the dignity of woman as such—*not* as the possession of the husband or father—will later become emblematic of Israelite collective self-understanding.

Hamor begins to make his case in strictly personal terms, pleading in the name of love: "The soul of my son longeth for your daughter. I pray you give her unto him to wife" (34:8). But he soon appeals to what he assumes is Israelite self-interest and makes a pitch for thoroughgoing intermarriage. (Hamor would certainly have noticed that Jacob had eleven sons, already or soon to be in need of wives.) Hamor generously invites Jacob to "*give* your daughters unto us"—if and when and to whom *you* please—and to "*take* our daughters unto you"—again, presumably, whomever *you* please. There is no allusion to compulsion or force; indeed, there is not even a whiff of Hivite *taking-as-they*-please, let alone taking without prior paternal consent. (Needless to say, for the Canaanites, the consent of the *daughter* will play no part in arranging marriages.) Appealing still further to self-interest, Hamor proposes that the Israelites may then dwell among his people, trade freely in the land, and gain possessions there.

In short, if they cooperate, the Israelites may get them wives and (other) valuable goods, through free and peaceful trade. At this point, Shechem adds his own personal appeal, promising to pay whatever bride-price is asked, if only they will give him the damsel to wife; he, too, shows no shame or remorse, and makes no mention that he has already taken lustfully by force what he now proposes to buy generously with gifts.

We, fathers of daughters or brothers of sisters, listening to this plea and this proposal—how do we react to such a generous and useful and profitable offer? Shall we be swayed by professions of love and promises of peaceful trade and coexistence? Shall we overlook injustice for the sake of gain, overlook an assault on our daughter (sister) so that we might easily get wives for all of our sons? Or shall we side with the moral indignation of the sons of Israel, who see only the defilement of their sister and who craftily plot revenge?

Outnumbered by the Shechemites, Jacob's sons have no alternative but to proceed with guile. The device they use is ingenious—not only strategically, but especially morally and symbolically:

> We cannot do this thing, to give our sister to one that is uncircumcised; for that were a reproach unto us. Only on this condition will we consent unto you: if ye will be as we are, that every male of you be circumcised; then will we give our daughters unto you and we will take your daughters to us, and we will dwell with you, and *we will become one people.* But if ye will not hearken unto us, to be circumcised, then we will take our daughter and we will be gone [34:14-17; emphasis added].

The sons ignore the personal side of the request and treat the matter entirely politically. Just as they saw that the crime against Dinah was a crime also against Israel, so they see that the union of man and woman anticipates children and, therefore, the question of perpetuating one's ways and beliefs. They make explicit the assimilationist meaning that was merely implicit in the Shechemite proposal for intermarriage; for freely to exchange daughters means, culturally, *to become one people.* The question is, whose ways will the assimilated populace adopt? Shall they still be the people of the covenant, whose sign is marked in the flesh by circumcision? Confronted with this question, the sons of Israel assert and insist upon the difference of their ways, a difference which reminds always of God and His promise to Abraham.

To be sure, the use of circumcision here serves mainly as part of the strategy for revenge. Almost certainly, the sons do not intend to go through with the agreement for intermarriages. Many readers will even blame the sons for their deceit, all the more because it exploits and perhaps abuses for violent purposes the sacred sign of the covenant. Still, the demand for circumcision carries moral meaning on its own, regardless of the deceitful intention and bloody outcome. For it reveals still more deeply the differences between

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the peoples and their different attitudes toward women and sexuality.

The Israelites are, of course, not the only people who practice male circumcision. But with them, the ritual has a high and special meaning: it is the sign of the covenant God made with Abraham, the founder. A brief backward glance at that story will deepen our understanding of the present one.

THE story of God's new covenant is the immediate sequel to the story of the birth of Ishmael, Abraham's long-awaited first-born son, whom Hagar bore when Abraham was eighty-six years old, eleven years after he left Haran in search of God's rich promise. Now that Abraham has a son, the crucial task of perpetuation begins in earnest. As Ishmael approaches young manhood (age thirteen), God, looking to the future, proposes a new covenant, telling Abraham to "walk before Me and be thou wholehearted. And I will make My covenant between thee and Me, and will multiply thee exceedingly" (17:1-2). The covenant is announced in explicit relation to the theme of procreation and perpetuation.

God's part of the covenant is very generous and full: He promises Abraham that He will make him exceedingly fruitful, the father of nations and the progenitor of kings; He will make an everlasting covenant with the seed of Abraham to be their God; He will give unto them the land of Canaan as an everlasting possession. As for Abraham (and his seed), the obligation is simple: keeping the covenant simply means *remembering* it, that is, marking its token or sign in the flesh of every male throughout the generations, by the act of circumcision.

Why circumcision? We can think of many possible reasons, all of them apt. Unlike the rainbow, the sign of God's covenant with Noah and all life after the Flood, which demanded nothing from man in return, circumcision is an *un*-natural sign—both artificial and conventional. It is the memorial of an agreement that deems it necessary (hence, conventional); it must be made by man (hence, artificial); yet it is marked in the organ of generation (hence, also natural). The world as given, and life even when secure ("No more floods"), are not yet completed; the best way to live remains hidden and must be revealed by additional human effort, exercised in the face of powerful human drives that lead us astray.

Circumcision emphasizes, even as it also restricts and transcends, the natural and the generative, sanctifying them in the process: under God's command, men willingly produce in their living and generational flesh the mark of their longing for God, of their desire for His benevolence and care. Though it is the child who bears the mark, the obligation falls rather on the parents; it is a perfect symbol of the relation among the generations, for the deeds of parents are always inscribed, often heritably, into the lives of their children.

THE obligation of circumcision calls parents to the parental task. Performed soon after birth, it circumcises their pride, reminding them that children are a gift, for which they are not themselves creatively responsible. More importantly, they are called from the start to assume the obligations of transmission. They are compelled to remember, now when it counts, that they belong to a long line of descent, beginning with Abraham who was called and who sought to walk before God and to be wholehearted. They are reminded that bearing the child is the easy part, that rearing him well is the real vocation. They are summoned to continue the chain by rearing their children looking up to the sacred and the divine, by initiating them into God's chosen ways. And they are made aware of the consequences for their children—now and hereafter—of a failure to hearken to the call: "And the uncircumcised male . . . that soul shall be cut off from his people; he hath broken My covenant." With circumcision, the child, and all *his* potential future generations, are symbolically offered to the way of God.

But why a rite applicable only to the male children? Because males especially need extra inducements to undertake the parental role. Freed by nature from the consequences of their sexuality, probably both less fitted and less interested by nature than women for the work of nurture and rearing, men need to be acculturated to the work of transmission. Virility and potency are, from the Bible's point of view, much less important than decency, righteousness, and holiness. The father is re-called to this teaching, and, accordingly, symbolically remakes his son's masculinity for generations to come. When he comes of age, the son will also come to understand the meaning of the mark of his fathers and their covenant with God; presumably, it will decisively affect how he uses his sexual powers and how he looks on the regenerative and nurturing powers of woman.

Shechem, the rapist, was psychically as well as physically uncircumcised. First, he acted as if his *lust* entitled him to have his way with Dinah. Afterward, the ground of his claim shifted to his *desire*, to his longing for her. The generative meaning of sexuality and the attendant reverence owed to womanly shame he understood not at all; much less did he have in mind a right partner for the future work of transmission. And, as we shall see, he will soon lead his entire city into destruction, just so that he can satisfy his heart's desire. The Shechemites, like Shechem himself, will submit to circumcision, but with no understanding of what it means, in itself and, especially, to the Israelites. Shechemite circumcision turns out to

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be a parody of the covenant, just as Shechem's request to be given a bride whom he had already taken and defiled was a parody of a proper marriage proposal.

HAMOR and Shechem are well pleased with the proposal of Jacob's sons, and Shechem hastens to the deed: "And the young man deferred not to do the thing, *because he had delight in Jacob's daughter.* And he was honored above all the house of his father" (34:19). But the proposal required that *all* the men of Shechem submit to circumcision. How could they be persuaded? To win the hearts of their fellow Shechemites, Hamor and Shechem smoothly talk business:

> These men are peaceable with us; therefore let them dwell in the land, and trade therein; for, behold, the land is large enough for them; let us *take their* daughters to us for wives, and let us *give* them *our* daughters [34:21; emphasis added].

The appeal begins quietly: the men (i.e., Jacob's clan) are not warlike or troublesome, and, as there is enough land, let them live here and trade. Even better, *we* can *take* their daughters (whomever *we* like) and we can *give* them—*if* and when *we* like—our daughters; in speaking to their own, Hamor and Shechem cast the liberalities differently from when they spoke to Jacob and his sons. But the cost of this bargain in spousing has yet to be mentioned, and, to pay it, the people will require an even better reward:

> Only on this condition will the men consent unto us to dwell with us, *to become one people,* if every male among us be circumcised, as they are circumcised. *Shall not their cattle and their substance and all their beasts be ours?* Only let us consent unto them, and they will dwell with us [34:22-23; emphasis added].

The appeal succeeds: every able-bodied man is circumcised, presumably the married as well as the unmarried. Some, perhaps, are tempted by the promise of prospective brides; others—probably the majority—more greedy than lustful, are moved by the promise of capturing through assimilation all of the Israelite wealth and cattle, so confident are they that their superior numbers and ways will prevail. The Shechemites are culturally open to all customs, provided that they increase the gross national product.

As it turns out, their leaders have made false promises, or, at best, have exposed their own deviousness. For, at least for the time being, Jacob and Israel have no marriageable daughters but Dinah, and she is (in many senses) "taken" (note well: she has not been returned to her people, but remains in Shechem's house). The appeal to gain and greed is perhaps a disingenuous promise to the rabble—hiding from view that only Shechem himself will profit from their acquiescence. Otherwise, if honest, the appeal to the Shechemites betrays a rather sordid view of the entire proposal to "become one people." In any case, the Shechemites circumcise themselves wholeheartedly for gain, not—as did Abraham—to gain wholeheartedness. What they gain, in fact, is their own death and the ruin of their city.

THIS is not to justify the excessive harshness of the penalty exacted by Dinah's (full) brothers, Simeon and Levi, who steal into the city "post-operatively," while the men are in pain, and slay all the males, and take Dinah from Shechem's house. But it does suggest the (at least partial) fitness of collective punishment, bearing out the earlier suggestion that Prince Shechem is somehow representative of his entire city—both as paradigm and as head. Here is a nation indifferent to rape and the defilement of women, eager for intermarriage, keen upon gain, coveting both its neighbors' wives and its neighbors' cattle—equally regarded as objects for possession. Here is a people that will accept circumcision as a price for profit, to gain a woman or to win a herd of cattle, not as a reminder of the importance of rearing your children in a spirit of reverence. No one is moved by this self-inflicted act on the genitals to reflect—or to suffer pangs of conscience—on the rape or on the proper use of one's sexuality. No one is moved to feel awe or reverence for the divine. Insufficiently respectful of women, with corruption in their hearts, the Shechemites cannot be kept from being cut off as a people by mere circumcision in the flesh. It is no justification of their slaughterers to say that the Shechemites are not fit to survive.

The slaughter of the entire manhood of Shechem could, in fact, be perhaps defended as a matter of necessity and on grounds of *Realpolitik.* Limited revenge taken upon the young prince alone would unquestionably have resulted in counter-vengeance: one could hardly expect the Shechemites to regard his killing as just ("once women had been carried off, to take seriously the avenging of them is the part of fools"); and, justice aside, they would certainly have struck back in defense of their own first family. Greatly outnumbered, Jacob's sons would have stood little chance in an all-out battle; and while the Lord's intercession might have given them the upper hand, they would have had no good reason to count on divine aid in the fighting. Besides, Dinah, their sister, was still in Shechemite hands. Guile, deception, and stealth, followed by a massive "surgical" strike of "protective reaction," would be a sound strategy under the circumstances.

Yet it is unlikely that the sons of Jacob are ruled simply by such shrewd and cool calculation. Most likely, they are driven by rage and by the desire to visit the harshest possible punishment on Shechem and his entire kind. They do not cease

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with killing the men. They spoil the entire city "because *they* had defiled their sister." They take everything, both from the city and the fields—flocks, herds, asses, and all their wealth they spoil; all their children and all their wives they take captive. (This last, of course, could be recommended on grounds of policy: to obliterate the possibility of future generations that will come looking for revenge.) Their zeal for revenge knows no limits: the innocent suffer with the guilty. Worse, the avengers profit from their revenge. Even if justified or necessary, the attack reeks of barbaric cruelty. The most Machiavellian of readers experiences the horror of these "necessary" actions.

Jacob, too, is horrified, but for different reasons. The collective action, taken by his sons, has backfired; it has made it impossible for him to settle peacefully in the land as he had planned. Worse, his entire tribe is now at risk; his sons, in their zeal, have failed to consider that there are other Canaanite tribes who will not ignore the slaughter of their kinsmen:

> Ye have troubled me, to make me odious unto the inhabitants of the land, even unto the Canaanites and the Perizzites, and I being few in number, they will gather themselves together against me and smite me; and I shall be destroyed, I and my house [34:30].

Later, at the end of his life, Jacob, in blessing his sons, will heap moral opprobrium and curses upon Simeon and Levi.[6] But here, after the deed itself, his concerns are strictly political-prudential, and mainly self-preservative. He is now a pariah and, worse, a likely victim, in the land of his fathers, a land which, the reader knows, was promised to his ancestors and their seed.

BUT Jacob's sons have the last word. They reject his rebuke and his utilitarian and survivalist concerns, in the name of morality:

> As with a harlot should one deal with our sister [34:31]?

This rhetorical question, especially because it is the story's last word, reverberates in our minds: "As with a harlot should one deal with our sister?" What does this mean? And why is this the last word?

The word translated "like a harlot" comes from the verb *zânâh*, from a primitive root meaning "highly fed," and, therefore, "wanton." It means "to commit adultery" (especially for the female) or "to play the harlot," and, in the causative, "to cause to commit fornication" or "to cause to be [or to play] the whore." But it also easily acquires the (figurative) meaning, "to commit idolatry," "to whore after false gods," on the understanding that Israel is betrothed solely to God. Both meanings can be heard in the brothers' rejoinder to Jacob.

At first glance, the brothers seem to be equating rape with harlotry, or, at least, suggesting that what Shechem did to Dinah might have been overlooked—or at least mitigated—were Dinah a whore. Similar sorts of arguments are, to this day, advanced in defense of accused rapists: "Look how she dresses." "She sleeps around." "What was she doing in his apartment, or in that fraternity house?" "She was asking for it." Even granting their possible relevance, such complaints of "provocation" never constitute an adequate defense for rape—though they might make it more difficult to determine whether what transpired was in fact rape and not, say, seduction. For this reason, we must not construe the "motto" of Jacob's sons to mean that it would be permissible to rape a harlot. Rather, the sons are asserting that *their failure to defend their sister's honor* would be tantamount to regarding her as if she were a harlot. Worse, to practice "turning the other cheek" would mean (tacitly) to share, by acquiescence, in her defilement. The sons see very clearly that *in rape—and in indifference to rape—a man, or a community, treats a woman the way a harlot treats herself.*

Regardless of their divergent motives, the deeds of rapist and harlot have a convergent inner meaning. Both are without modesty, shame, or sexual self-restraint. Both are indifferent to the generative meaning of (especially female) sexuality, both regard sex purely as a matter of present and private (especially male) gratification. Both are indifferent to the fact that sex points to future generations, those to whom we give life and nurture, paying back, in the only way we can, our debts to our own forebears. Both are especially indifferent to marriage and family, those conventional institutions whose main purpose is to provide a true home for fruitful and generous love and for the proper rearing of children. And both are indifferent to the moral, cultural, and religious beliefs of the sexual partner, so crucial for the preservation of lineage and the perpetuation of one's ways.

Whether or not they understand fully what they are saying, Jacob's sons remind Jacob (who had hoped for peaceful coexistence)—as they instruct the reader—that the alternative to defending the virtue of one's sisters is to abandon them, and all future generations, to the realm of false gods. Rape—like harlotry and the indiscriminate intermarriage proposed by the Shechemites—means the spiritual defilement of an entire people. The defense of chastity and the transmission of holiness are part of a single package.

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[6] "Simeon and Levi are brethren; weapons of violence their kinship. Let my soul not come into their council; unto their assembly let my glory not be united; for in their anger they slew men, and in their self-will they houghed oxen. Cursed be their anger, for it was fierce, and their wrath, for it was cruel; I will divide them in Jacob, and scatter them in Israel" (49: 5-7).

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FAIR-MINDED readers of the story are left with nagging questions. We wonder about the practice of deceit and the merely cunning exploitation of the holy rite of circumcision. We are troubled by the difficulty of practicing proper vengeance, for one may not be able to finish what one has started, or one may, in heat, be led to cruel extremes. We see the terrible dilemmas of settling in a land amid people who are not God-fearing, especially if one has imprudent and zealous offspring. We see how zeal in defense of God's ways can lead men into war, and how, should they prove successful, the spoils of war can lead them, ironically, *away* from God's ways. Yet we are inclined to believe, with Jacob's sons, that a culture that will make war to defend the virtue of its women, against a culture that dishonors other people's women, proves itself—by this very fact of fighting—to be not only superior in justice but also more fit to survive and flourish.

It would seem, from the sequel, that God does not disagree. For it is He who has the genuinely last word. Right after the speech of the sons, God speaks to Jacob:

> Arise, go up to Beth-El, and dwell there; and make there an altar unto God, Who appeared unto thee when thou didst flee from the face of Esau thy brother [35:1].

Jacob, who had tried to settle permanently in the face of Shechem, is told now to complete his journey. Jacob must return to Beth-El, "the house of God," where Abraham had built an altar and first called upon the name of the Lord, and where Jacob himself had dreamed his famous dream of the ladder just before his departure into Paddan-Aram. Jacob now understands that he has been called to spiritual repurification. He commands his household and all that are with him to "put away the strange gods that are among you, and purify yourselves, and change your garments; and let us arise, and go up to Beth-El . . . " (35:2-3). He collects and buries the foreign gods and the earrings (probably from the captive Shechemite women and children but also, perhaps, from Rachel), and the entire clan heads off to Beth-El. And as they journey, "a terror of God was upon the cities that were round about them, and they did not pursue after the sons of Jacob" (35:5).

After Jacob builds the altar at Beth-El, God appears to him again, this time to pronounce His first full divine blessing upon him:

> "Thy name is Jacob; thy name shall not be called any more Jacob, but Israel shall be thy name"; and He called his name Israel. And God said unto him, "I am God Almighty. Be fruitful and multiply; a nation and a company of nations shall be of thee, and kings shall come out of thy loins; and the land which I gave unto Abraham and Isaac, to thee will I give it, and to thy seed after thee I will give the land" [35:10-12].

Context leads us to suspect that God's revelation and great benediction—especially for fecundity and posterity—are, in part, a commentary on the Israelites' demonstrated devotion to the dignity of their daughters. The divine renaming of Jacob now carries also the meaning of the people; it is singularly appropriate that the people are renamed—and morally reborn—after this episode.

YET despite God's intervention, we must not conclude that our story has a happy ending. Dinah, though avenged, remains defiled. The sons may have satisfaction, but she has shame. In our focus on the vengeance of the brothers, we run the risk of forgetting the sister, the daughter, the maiden. But one should not mistake silence—neither ours nor the story's—for indifference. True, we are told absolutely nothing about Dinah's feelings or thoughts—not about the rape itself, or the aftermath with Shechem and his sweet speeches, or the proposal of marriage, or the bloody slaughter of Shechem and the men of his entire city, not even about her "rescue" by her brothers. We have not one spoken word from her own lips, not before, not after. And we hear no words spoken to her by her father or brothers. In dreadful silence, we can only imagine the terrible consequences for this young maiden—psychic, social, spiritual. As far as we know, she never marries and never bears children. Her name appears only once hereafter in the entire Bible (Genesis 46:15), all alone in the list of names of the household of Jacob who accompanied him on the move to Egypt.[7]

But do not mistake the reticence: the silence of her shame cries out for our sympathy and searching attention.

Unlike other women we have met in Genesis, Dinah is defined solely by her womanliness. Unlike Sarah who could command her husband, unlike Rebekah, a paragon of tact and prudence,[8] unlike the rivalrous sisters Leah and Rachel, each with her own capacity for self-defense, Dinah is, for us, merely a maid—exposed, innocent, vulnerable to male predation. Let us not jump to the wrong conclusion: of course, she has thoughts and feelings, motives and desires; of course, she is a person in her own right. But for present purposes, the biblical author abstracts from her inner life; he wants us to concentrate entirely on the fact that Dinah is a *woman*, and, more precisely, a young and *unmarried* woman, and, of course, a daughter. Her womanly ancestors we know mainly as wives and mothers. With Dinah we are compelled to think about maidenhood—

[7] Even her mention here in the census is oblique, as if she were only ambiguously present: "These are the sons of Leah whom she bore unto Jacob in Paddan-Aram, and with Dinah his daughter."

[8] See my essay on Rebekah, "A Woman for All Seasons," COMMENTARY, September 1991.

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and about daughters. How should they comport themselves? And what should we, their fathers and their mothers, teach them in matters of men, sex, and marriage? How should we help them avoid the ever-present dangers of rape, harlotry, intermarriage?

Jacob, it seems, did not understand the need for such education and protection. His mind focused (understandably) on other matters, perhaps reassured regarding his future by his having numerous sons, he failed to see that it is reverent and virtuous daughters who safeguard a nation's heritage. No daughters, no nation. He might have known better. He himself had been sent to Paddan-Aram to find a wife, so as not to marry a Canaanite woman; from the stellar example of his own mother, he should have known the importance of woman—both to ensure lineage and to foster proper rearing—and taken steps to protect his daughter's purity. But, though he was in when she went out, he prevented neither her going nor her going alone; he did not even warn her against the dangers. He was, to say the least, insufficiently concerned about her maidenhood—until it was too late.

Yet, with the help of the story, we readers can see the need for a special education and protection of daughters. The circumcision of the males, symbolizing the restraint of male promiscuity and beckoning males to familial responsibility, must have its female counterpart: modesty, caution, refusal, self-reverence, and chastity, all exercised in the service of eventual marriage—love-filled, fruitful, sanctified. This is not, as critics would have it, the infamous double standard. In Israel, it is a single standard, differently applied, as befits the natural differences between men and women.

WE AMERICANS, especially the more "enlightened" and emancipated among us, have managed these past three decades to become thoroughly lost in matters sexual. The sexual revolution, made possible by the contraceptive separation of sexual activity from its implicit generative consequences, deliberately sacrificed female virtue on the altar of the god of pleasure now. Not surprisingly, the result was emancipated male predation and exploitation, as men were permitted easy conquests of women without responsibility or lasting intimacy. Unhappy with this outcome, but failing to appreciate its roots in the overthrow of modesty, the liberated women's movement mounted a moralistic political campaign against the "patriarchy," seeking power and respect, mistakenly believing that the respect women need *as women* is based solely on power.

Whatever the benefits in the workplace, the consequences for private life are horrendous. Romance is replaced by relationships; people do not fall in love, they just "come on to" one another—like lice; courtship is nonexistent. Speech is unbelievably crude and explicit, and the greatest heroes of the popular culture, sporting (at best) their underwear on the outside, gyrate obscenely on television. The centuries-old delicate dance of young man and young woman, with its subtle steps and missteps, its whispered secrets and mysterious rhythms, is all but forgotten, replaced if not by explicit crudity then by ideology. Young women, humorless and grim, with jaws clenched and shoulders padded, cut an angry path across the would-be fields of dreams, supported in their demands for empowerment by those oh-so-sensitive males who will defend to the death not a woman's honor but her need to learn the manly art of self-defense. Many lonely women, more than can safely admit it, secretly hope to meet a gentleman; but the vast majority steadfastly refuse to be ladies—indeed, no longer know what it means. Small wonder, then, so much sexual harassment and even rape. When power becomes the name of the game, the stronger will get his way.

Under such circumstances, one cannot exactly blame women for wanting to learn how to defend themselves against sexual attack. But, addressing the symptom not the cause, the remedies of karate and "take back the night"—and, still more, the shallow beliefs about sexual liberation that support these practices—can only complete the destruction of healthy relations between man and woman. For, truth to tell, the night never did and never can belong to women, except for the infamous women-of-the-night. Only a restoration of sexual self-restraint and sexual self-respect—for both men and women—can reverse our rapid slide toward Shechem. Only a recovery of the deeper understanding of sexuality, accessible to us (among other places) in the stories of the Hebrew Bible, can allow true love and family happiness to flourish.

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A Map of Modern Art

Michael Lind

BETWEEN the 60's and today the visual arts ceased to matter to the life of the mind. In living memory, an educated person was expected to know the names of the two or three most prominent painters, sculptors, and architects of the day. Picasso's studio in liberated Paris was a tourist stop for American GI's; Frank Lloyd Wright was a celebrity. Today, even well-informed people would have trouble identifying Jenny Holzer or Frank Gehry. There is, of course, an "art world," but it is as self-contained and remote from the concerns of most educated people as is the fashion world (with which, indeed, it seems to blend at times in a single universe of hype). Now and then, fundamentalist outrage with avant-garde artworks like those of Robert Mapplethorpe attracts attention; even this, though, to many literate Americans, is a war of pygmies and cranes, taking place in a distant country.

How is it that the visual arts have drifted so far from the concerns of people who are manifestly *not* philistine? One reason is the baffling multiplication of styles; to tell the score, a gallery-goer almost needs a Ph.D. But that is not the entire answer. Underlying the apparent chaos of abstract, neo-expressionist, mixed-media, minimalist, and performance art are a few basic conceptions of the purpose of the visual arts, which can be understood without great difficulty. To understand, however, is not necessarily to approve.

Understanding begins with a rejection of the conventional approaches to the history and discussion of art. For the appreciation and the evaluation of contemporary art are harmed more than helped by boosterish approaches by the "arts community" to educate a public suspicious of and hostile to avant-garde art. Boosters try to make avant-garde art more accessible by playing down its philosophical and political implications and presenting art history as a linear progression of styles, each proceeding in some way from the former, each with a life span of a few decades or in some cases a few years. The sequence of Fauvism, Cubism, Surrealism, Abstract Expressionism, Color Field, Minimalism, Pop Art, Conceptual Art, Earth Art, Neo-Geo, and Neo-Expressionism is treated almost as a typology of nature, like the geological sequence or the Hertzprung-Russell diagram in astrophysics.

This art-historical catechism, however, gets things badly wrong. First of all, older styles are not abandoned when new ones become fashionable. Painters did not simultaneously drop abstraction for Campbell's Soup cans in the 60's, nor did they march off in unison in the 70's to build earth monuments. Even worse, the "Whig theory" of art history ignores the fact that successive schools of modern art have represented, not cumulative development within a single modernist tradition, but distinct and incompatible views of what art is.

Even technical categories—painting, sculpture, realism, abstraction—may be misleading. A painting by Balthus and a photo-realist painting may both be "figurative," but the artists are doing quite different things. Similarly, the category of "landscape art" would lump together the monumental projects of Robert Smithson and Christo. But Smithson's massive creations, like his 1970 *Spiral Jetty*, a 1500-foot coil of rocks in Great Salt Lake in Utah, arguably have more in common with some varieties of abstract sculpture and painting than with the metaphysical pranksterism of Christo, who says of his temporary project, "The Umbrellas, Joint Project for Japan and U.S.A.": "The financing of the project and its temporariness challenge our notions about the capitalist system geared to profit, and about the so-called immortality of art. Both are part of the aesthetics of the project." Unlike Smithson's, then, Christo's giant projects derive from much the same impulse as has been manifested by other artworks at different scales like Marcel Duchamp's urinal and the *Lipstick Cannon* of Claes Oldenburg.

The key to understanding contemporary art is thus not the succession of styles or technical classifications but the aesthetic impulses behind them. Looking at it in this way, we find that much, although not all, modern and contemporary art is primarily informed by one of three such impulses—the formalist, the iconoclastic, and the sacerdotal.

Of these, the formalist impulse has been the most important in 20th-century art. Indeed, much of the glory of postwar American abstraction consists of following this impulse to the limits of expression in various media.

Earlier in this century, abstraction had been

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mixed up with various kinds of occultism and spiritualism, or had been implicated in the apocalyptic project of creating a new, anti-bourgeois civilization—a project that came to grief in the Soviet Union, Fascist Italy, and Nazi Germany. But in the democratic West after 1945, modernism ceased finally to be part of a vague civilizational movement, and became, simply, a "style." Modern artists might continue to express radical political attitudes and bemoan the corruption and materialism of the West, but none any longer seriously expected parliaments, newspapers, popular cinema, and other manifestations of bourgeois and mass culture to be swept away. On the contrary, big business and mass culture showed a distressing willingness to absorb and mass-produce artistic modernism—as a fashion.

In these disenchanting circumstances, "art-for-art's-sake" formalism became the dominant tradition. The spirit of the age in art was no longer part of a broader *Zeitgeist* promising revolutionary social change. The artist had no social function other than to produce the great masterpiece. But, in contrast to the masterpieces of the past, these would not be representational images; they would be purged of everything but pure color and pure form.

High modernism held that by contemplating its creations the viewer would be transported from the mundane world of everyday life. In other words, formalist modernism is a kind of devotional art, for the secular soul. And, in fact, many people undoubtedly have undergone what can only be described as spiritual experiences in the presence of the immense paintings of Jackson Pollock, Robert Motherwell, and Mark Rothko (though such a transcendence is partial, at best: as C.S. Lewis observed, "You will not get eternal life by just feeling the presence of God in flowers and music").

If Rothko and Adolph Gottlieb represent the ascetic side of this formalist tradition, its heroic and monumental side emerges in the sculpture of Richard Serra and the landscape art of Robert Smithson. Such artists have sought to create icons of the sublime by exploiting the effects of scale. But in the absence of a shared communal vision—of the kind that underlay the pyramids, the cathedrals, or for that matter Mount Rushmore—these attempts to express personal vision on a gigantic scale all too easily come to seem megalomaniacal, even antisocial. Serra's *Tilted Arc*, deeply hated by the public, was removed in 1989 from Manhattan's Federal Plaza by the federal government that had commissioned it only after the defeat of a $30-million lawsuit by the artist, who placed his "moral rights" over the wishes of the patron and the sentiments of the public.

STILL, in spite of its tendency toward bombastic exaltation of the artwork and the artist, the formalist impulse has tended to have an emancipatory effect—emancipating the imagination from the ephemeral, including the ephemera of politics. But in the past several decades, artists have come to the fore who have no desire to be emancipated in this way and who are dissatisfied with the world view of formalist modernism and its ideal of the artist-as-artist. One such group is made up of the iconoclasts with their definition of the artist as trickster, or as revolutionary.

The iconoclastic modernism of Pop Art and its successors did not grow out of Abstract Expressionism, as the Whig theory of art history would have it; it represents an entirely different school of thought hostile to the exalted claims of the formalist tradition, a school which goes back to Marcel Duchamp and Dadaism in post-World War I Zurich. In fact, there is very little in contemporary iconoclastic art that was not anticipated before World War II, from the Surrealist program of liberating the unconscious from convention through a Rimbaudian *dérèglement de tous les sens* to the politicized variant of Dada that flourished in Weimar Berlin in the work of George Grosz and others.

In its post-World War II American revival, iconoclasm began rather tamely. In the late 50's, Robert Rauschenberg borrowed the hoary idea of "ready-mades" from Duchamp and brought forth a stuffed goat; Jasper Johns displayed the American flag; Roy Lichtenstein, quotations from banal mass art; Claes Oldenburg, plaster casts of vegetables. This warmed-over Dadaism was dignified by being presented as an intellectual exploration of aesthetic questions: What is art? Do paintings have to have frames? Does sculpture have to stand on a pedestal? Can found objects be art, too?

Yet to "question" art in such a way as to stress that it is nothing but a tissue of formal conventions is dramatically to announce the obvious. This kind of iconoclasm (which has parallels in deconstruction) could be extended to any conventional form of communication—treaties, for example. Treaties are written in words. Why not in hieroglyphs? What about a treaty that is memorized, then forgotten? In what sense is it a treaty?

Such brain-teasers are deadly dull—and sometimes just plain deadly. During the second part of a "documented performance," *In Search of the Miraculous* (1975), which involved a solo New York-Amsterdam yacht voyage, the Dutch artist Bas Jan Ader was lost at sea, and not merely metaphorically. (Whether the Miraculous was found remains unknown.)

More interesting, or at least more titillating, is another tendency in iconoclastic art. Inevitably, perhaps, questioning of artistic conventions turns into questioning not only of formal but of social and moral conventions. Just as inevitably, perhaps, this leads to pornography.

The more pretentious sort of pornography, ever since the Marquis de Sade, has always denied that it is merely gratifying the salacious appetite; rather, it is supposed to serve political liberalism

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and intellectual enlightenment by its antinomian exposure of the artificiality of common social and moral categories. In the case of Jeff Koons, whose depictions of himself having sex with his wife, the Italian ex-porn star and parliamentarian Ilona "La Cicciolina" Staller, were shown at New York's Sonnabend Gallery last year, such claims can be easily dismissed. (Sonnabend, it might be recalled, is the gallery that in 1972 featured Vito Acconci masturbating underneath a ramp for six hours for the benefit of gallery-goers.) But most of the obscenity in art that has provoked controversy recently is so resolutely untitillating that one must take its antinomian rationale seriously.

Less commented upon, but just as prevalent, is the avant-garde obsession with the obscenely violent—images of traffic accidents, genocide, nuclear war. To distinguish their productions from ordinary pornography and violent cinema, these artistic purveyors of the scandalous claim the prophet's prerogative of shocking a complacent society. The putative purpose of avant-garde obscenity is to promote Bertolt Brecht's alienation-effect, to shake the audience loose from its attachment to conventional categories.

For Brecht, of course, this was only the first stage in a two-stage strategy. The audience was to be alienated from bourgeois-capitalist conventions in order to be more easily indoctrinated into Communism. Some contemporary artists evidently still share not only Brecht's aesthetics but something like Brecht's politics. For example, last summer, at the Spoleto Festival USA in Charleston, South Carolina, Ann Hamilton filled a garage with 14,000 pounds of folded work clothes. In the words of Arthur C. Danto of the *Nation*:

> Behind this extraordinary presence she placed an individual actively erasing the texts of history books, erasing, as it were, the official history of Charleston—involving generals, antebellum beauties, swaggering planters—and replacing it with the history of nameless laborers.

In the aftermath of Communism's collapse, it surely says something that contemporary American artists and critics can contemplate the symbolic erasure of history in the name of the proletarian masses with a frisson of approval rather than a shudder of horror.

Class is only one-third of the class/race/gender trinity worshipped by an avant-garde art world that has been "colonized" (to use a favored word) by fashionably leftist academic sociology. Guillermo Gómez-Peña, a self-described "border shaman," seeks to raise our consciousness about Latin and North American cultural differences by such means as speaking in "Spanglish" and dressing as an Aztec. In one performance, this winner of a 1991 MacArthur Foundation "genius" award buried huge steel staples with one prong in the United States and the other in Mexico (get it?). Another artist who focuses on race is Jawole Willa Jo Zollar, founder and director of Urban Bush Women. This black American dance ensemble puts on performances like *Song of Lawino* (1988), in which a group of women in a Ugandan slum discuss the effects of white education on their men.

Then there is gender. Judy Chicago's *Dinner Party* sums up a particular strand of contemporary feminism—the attempt to create a "women's history" by taking a variety of historical women from their social contexts and drafting them (pun intended) as political and artistic predecessors. Somewhat reminiscent on a smaller scale of Chicago's combination of history and traditionally female imagery are the collages and memory-assemblages which female artists contribute in disproportionate numbers to museums and galleries across the country. By emphasizing personal and family memories and domestic imagery, this kind of art evidently tries to redeem rather than to reject conventional women's roles. The same cannot be said of the work of Karen Finley, the controversial performance artist who smears herself with symbolic chocolate excrement and puts jello in her bra to symbolize the degradation of women that allegedly is characteristic of our society.

The AIDS epidemic, too, has produced its own agitprop. According to a reviewer in *Artforum*, Adam Rolston's 1991 installation, *Trojans*, is "affiliated with the recent trend among artists concerned with critiques of gender and sexuality to recuperate Minimalist and post-Minimalist paradigms by reinvigorating them with putatively subversive sociopolitical paradigms"—all this about 1,000 stacked condom boxes. Another artist's creative response to the AIDS crisis is Donald Moffett's superimposition, on homosexual pornography, of the words: "Call the US Supreme Court 1 (202) 479-3000 ask five of the nine justices if they're getting any."

Art with a message need not be bad art. From Goya's *Horrors of War* to Picasso's *Guernica*, great art has been made from outrage at atrocity, and political propaganda has produced a few certifiable masterpieces, like David's *Napoleon Crossing the Alps*. For propaganda to be great art, though, it must be *art*; the artist must recognize the independent existence of aesthetic values, if only the better to subordinate them to a political or social message.

Far too much of today's iconoclastic art simply sacrifices subtlety of conception or quality of execution to the urgency of the message. What is more, all too often such art does not even attempt to convert or persuade; rather, it confirms the small and homogeneous audience of contemporary art in its parochial left-liberal prejudices. Although they may fancy themselves the bearers of uncomfortable truth to the unenlightened public, today's artistic iconoclasts are—to coin a phrase—screeching to the choir.

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SOMETHING like a constructive alternative to the dreary particularisms of politicized iconoclasm is offered by the third kind of contemporary art, the sacerdotal, with its conception of the artist as shaman or priest. Unlike formalism, this school rejects the emphasis on the masterpiece and art-for-art's-sake; unlike iconoclastic modernism, the new sacerdotal art seeks to go beyond questioning conventions and airing grievances and to create and affirm new identities, new communities.

As it happens, the high priests of the sacerdotal impulse have been German: the late Joseph Beuys and his disciple (the word is not too strong) Anselm Kiefer. The earnestness of Kiefer's attempts to redeem German traditions thought to be tainted by Nazism, along with the weight of his allusions (some of his best-known paintings are inspired by Paul Celan's moving elegy for Holocaust victims, *Todesfuge*), have perhaps warded off criticism that might have been directed at his crude execution and even cruder pictorial ideas (the imagination as a winged palette, etc.). A case can be made that Kiefer is not all that superior to the much-hyped American Julian Schnabel, who also specializes in portentous archetypes—the King of the Wood, God. (To be sure, their techniques differ: Schnabel mixes oil paint with broken crockery, spruce roots, and antlers, whereas Kiefer stirs straw into his soup of paint, latex, and shellac.)

The sacerdotal impulse is manifested in media other than painting. Performance art—familiar since the 60's as a vehicle for iconoclasm—becomes in the work of Beuys and like-minded artists something solemn, indeed self-consciously religious. "It is the transformation of substances that is my concern in art," Beuys once remarked, "rather than the traditional understanding of beautiful appearances. That is precisely what the shaman does in order to bring about change and development: his nature is therapeutic."

Such a conception of art and the artist blends in easily with a certain kind of American New Age mysticism. Consider the following description by one of the champions of this new sacerdotalism, Suzi Gablik:

> At the edge of a frozen lake, a woman dances herself into a visionary state. She wears an extraordinary garment of raffia and string that transforms her into the supernatural being she is impersonating. . . . The woman is Fern Schaffer, an artist from Chicago, enacting an empowerment ritual involving the cleansing of crystals, in the waters of Lake Michigan at the winter solstice.

Now, when a Hopi dancer, a Buddhist monk, an Orthodox rabbi, or a Catholic priest dons an unusual costume and begins a peculiar ritual, each has transcended his ordinary identity and become the embodiment of an established communal archetype. But when Fern Schaffer, artist from Chicago, performs a crystal-dance on the banks of Lake Michigan, she is merely eccentric, because there is not a religion, not even a sect, which has crystal-dances at the winter solstice as one of its rituals. Nor is there ever likely to be, because in real religions both dogma and ritual are established by prophets and saints, not by people with MFA's in art and design.

Why not?, one might ask. Gautama was a prince, Jesus a carpenter, Muhammad a merchant. Perhaps the next great prophet will be a performance artist. Perhaps; but religions with staying power have the kind of hard armature of morality and metaphysics which is missing from the sentimental New Age/Green mysticism that inspires most of the new sacerdotal artists. "The old seers knew that the earth is a sentient being," Gablik writes approvingly. "In the past, certain places on the planet were sanctified because of their high magnetic density. . . . " Next to this *fin-de-siècle* mixture of feminism, eco-mysticism, and Luddism, the weird neo-paganisms of Kandinsky, Malevich, and other early-20th-century artists seem like models of clarity, rigor, and discipline.

OF THE three impulses that inform the arts today, only the formalist is likely to produce any work of lasting value. One may wonder whether any purely nonobjective art can ever possess the emotive power of a figurative art that draws on myth and archetype, like the great allegories of Max Beckmann and Picasso. Even so, abstraction can still yield marvels to a talented and persistent artist, as is proven most recently by the elegant wood and rattan sculptures of Martin Puryear (to name only one example). Unlike his fellow MacArthur-grant winner Gómez-Peña, Puryear, though black, has not subordinated his art to tendentious ethnic politics. His work incorporates forms and techniques from various cultures into the international tradition of high modernism. In Puryear's description of the purpose of his work—to provide "an element of . . . fantasy, escape, imagination, retreat"—one hears an echo of Matisse: "What I dream of is an art of balance, of purity and serenity, devoid of troubling or depressing subject matter, an art [which would have] a soothing, calming influence on the mind. . . . "

The work of Puryear and others who abjure the temptations of propaganda and ersatz religion shows that newer notions of the artist as trickster and the artist as shaman have not completely eclipsed the older ideal: the artist as artist. As the great American modernist Stuart Davis observed, there is "nothing like a good ivory tower for the production of art." Although their work is in danger of being lost in the flotsam of the meretricious and the ephemeral, there are still artists who can understand the unprogressive and asocial sentiments Paul Klee confided once to his diary: "Color has me. That is the meaning of this happy hour. Color and I are one. I am a painter."

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Liberals, Conservatives & the Family

Jessica Gress-Wright

IN HER new book, *When the Bough Breaks*, Sylvia Ann Hewlett recites the dreary litany of economic and social stress on the American family. Since 1973, real wages have fallen and the median family income has been barely maintained by a surge of mothers into the workforce. At the same time, the costs of housing, transportation, and college education have all risen much faster than inflation, while, to compound the injury, the tax burden on families has increased.

The consequences have not been far to seek. Today, parents spend 40 percent less time with their children than a generation ago, and one quarter of all children under the age of six are poor. The divorce and illegitimacy rates have risen so far that, by one estimate, a white child born in the early 80's will have only a 30-percent chance to live to age seventeen with both biological parents at home, and a black child, a 6-percent chance. Nor is this all. The child suicide rate has tripled, scores for basic-skills tests used by large corporations to recruit new workers have fallen dramatically, juvenile crime continues to rise, the high-school dropout rate, once falling, has begun to climb again. Today no neighborhoods are exempt from the social and economic fallout of the past twenty years.

Politicians have hardly been indifferent to the family's cries of distress. Quite the reverse: as the *National Journal* cleverly put it a few months before the 1988 presidential election, "Mom's at work, the kids are at day care, Grandma's in the nursing home, and the checkbook's on empty. These are the problems of the New Family, and Congress is tuning in."

Conservatives and Republicans, of course, had long decried the wreckage of American family life, brought about, as they saw it, by the social policies of the 60's and 70's; indeed, the prospect of undoing some of the damage had been one of the main appeals of the Reagan candidacy in 1980, and "strengthening the family" continued to serve, at least rhetorically, as a catchword of the Right. What was new in the late 1980's was the addition to these ranks of a number of left-wing Democrats who dominated what the (London) *Economist* has called the "iron triangle" of American policy making: "that coalition of special interests, Congressmen, and civil servants" which for 25 years had pushed government as the solution to our family problems. In the stressed parents of the New Family, these Democrats saw a golden opportunity. If they could wrest the moral banner of "strengthening the family" from the conservatives' grasp, they could garner a huge pool of new voters while still promoting the familiar agenda of big government.

The chosen vehicle was not tax breaks, child allowances, or divorce reform, but child care.

IN 1987, the Act for Better Child Care (ABC), the centerpiece of the Democratic bid to seize the initiative in national family policy, was introduced by Representative Dale Kildee (D.-Mich.) and Senator Christopher Dodd (D.-Conn.). It was "designed to improve the safety and quality of child care throughout the country and to help low- and moderate-income working parents pay for such care." ABC meant to address what Ellen Galinsky, then president of the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC), called the "trilemma of child care: availability, affordability, and quality."

ABC was supported by a broad coalition of unions, feminists, advocacy organizations, and policy elites, each of whom had a financial and ideological stake in the bill's passage. Thus, the teachers associated with NAEYC, desperate for higher pay, were relying on ABC to restrict competition from low-wage family day-care providers and church-based day-care centers, as well as to provide the subsidies which would make higher salaries possible. Unions hoped to recruit badly needed new members from the ranks of the subsidized teachers. Feminists wanted to enable women to stay in the workforce. The Children's Defense Fund (CDF) wanted to recover the influence and patronage it had lost under Reagan. And "the liberal developmental intelligentsia" (in Jay Belsky's wry self-characterization) wanted a chance to apply its expertise in child-rearing on a national scale.

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Last, there was an important element of political revenge. The day-care lobby had never forgiven Richard Nixon for reneging on his promise to support the 1972 Child and Family Services Act. (He vetoed it, under pressure from the Right, on the grounds that it would promote, in George Will's phrase, the "sovietization of the American family.") ABC was the chance to strike back.

ABC's provisions reflected the interests and prejudices of those who wrote the bill and campaigned for its passage. Given that provenance, it soon became evident, not surprisingly, that ABC would not, in fact, improve the availability, affordability, and quality of child care *for ordinary parents*. "Availability" and "affordability" were carrots, vote-getters; in fact, the amount proposed—$2.5 billion for one year, only 70 percent of which could be used for subsidies—was derisory compared to the $75-100 billion it would cost to implement ABC's promises nationwide.

Under the provisions of the bill, moreover, the state would have to go after all providers who broke licensing rules, which meant that upward of 90 percent of all *current* day care in America would be ineligible for subsidy. This was the stick of "quality," and its enforcement would deprive parents of most forms of family day care—in which, typically, a young mother or an empty nester takes in a few children from the neighborhood. The irony was that parents have always preferred this sort of arrangement, for the good reason that it is the *only* kind of paid child care which has seemed able to solve the trilemma of availability, affordability, and quality, and to offer the advantages of convenience and flexibility to boot.

ABC had other problems, some of them inherent. For constitutional reasons, any government program which subsidized day care directly could not support sectarian activity. The wrangles over what this meant for church-based day care, which accounts for about 30 percent of all center-based care, went on for months. Finally, by using government funds to establish an infrastructure and subsidize paid care, ABC made it less attractive to stay home with children and thereby discriminated against precisely the sort of families who had the most to offer their children. ABC would expand the numbers of families needing help, while reducing the numbers of families able to do without it.

DESPITE a tremendous publicity campaign, ABC's passage was stormier than expected. Instead of a quick victory in time for the 1988 election, getting a child-care bill through Congress turned into a protracted three-year fight which would end by challenging the political foundations of the Democratic party.

The bill introduced in 1987 was passed, in two different versions, by the House and the Senate in 1988, only to die amid partisan acrimony and a filibuster led by Senator Orrin Hatch (R.-Utah). In an effort to overcome conservative opposition, ABC was reintroduced in January 1989 not by Dodd and Kildee but by Dodd and a newly-coopted Hatch. It was bolstered by the Great American Family Tour, a massive media blitz led by Representative Pat Schroeder (D.-Colo.) and a national survey placed in women's magazines designed to prove that parents wanted government-sponsored child care. Once again, however, ABC failed. This time, significantly, it was betrayed from within.

The defectors were two influentially placed Democrats, Representative George Miller (Calif.), of the House Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, and Representative Tom Downey (N.Y.), acting chairman of the House Ways and Means Subcommittee on Human Resources. Downey and Miller saw the writing on the wall when the newly-elected George Bush threatened to veto ABC. They set up their own rival: a bill combining an earned-income tax credit, which would put funds directly in the hands of poor working parents, and an earmarked child-care entitlement added to the Title XX Social Services Bloc Grants given to states. Both provisions directly repudiated the political agenda of ABC, which was to channel funds and the power of choice away from parents and to the day-care lobby.

ABC and its competitor were fought over through the summer, but ultimately both died in conference. The day-care lobby had been shafted by its own side.

Predictably, the lobby, headed by Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund, the "patron saint of bureaucratic child care," reacted with rage. The CDF had elected Congressman Miller its man-of-the-year just a few months earlier, out of gratitude for his support of ABC and his status as one of Edelman's most veteran allies. When the bill died, Edelman leaked a private memo excoriating Miller and Downey for their betrayal of the cause. Miller retaliated by calling her "hysterical"; Downey refused to take her telephone calls.

But Edelman was undaunted. When ABC was introduced for the third time early in 1990, she led dozens of minority "child-care victims" onto the House floor in an attempt to embarrass Congress into passing the twice-resurrected bill. Downey was indifferent. "There is," he said, "a paternalism among liberals about how people should live their lives. That's what I find most disturbing."

ABC's supporters among those liberals were not prepared to cede. Throughout 1990, amid squabbles over political philosophy and political turf, ABC and rival bills were patched and stitched and amended and patched again, until no one could be sure what would emerge from Congress. In the end, a package was passed consisting of a

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watered-down ABC, funded at $2.5 billion for five years (instead of $2.5 billion for the first year, as in the original bill), and a big $18.3 billion tax-relief package directed at low-income working parents. Ron Haskins, chief minority staffer on the House Ways and Means Committee, called it a major defeat for the day-care lobby. But Representative Gus Hawkins (D.-Calif.), a leading supporter of ABC, said that while the funding was inadequate, "it was a beachhead we may be able to use in the future." NAEYC was jubilant.

The reality, in other words, was ambiguous. The tax-relief portion of the bill, which would target direct aid to working parents with children, was a major gain for an emerging conservative/neoliberal coalition. It addressed the real causes of the "child-care crisis"—economic pressure on families—in a way which rewarded positive values like work and marriage. On the other hand, the ABC portion of the bill *was* a beachhead. It established (limited) federal regulation of day care, as well as the essentials of an infrastructure, something the lobbyists sought above all else; and it set no limits on future authorizations. The day-care lobby retained a toehold from which to fight.

Still, by failing to push through a truly massive new program, the lobby had lost the first round in a trial of strength which it itself had sought. Worse, the fight, instead of ensuring a quick and easy victory through Republican defections, as planned, had instead split the Democrats and humiliated the activists. The iron triangle of policy elites inside and outside government had been bent, and had been seen to be bent.

THUS was the 1987-90 effort to use child care to spearhead a revanche of the Great Society thwarted by new political realities. Nor was the emerging coalition between (some) Democrats and Republicans limited to child-care legislation. Terms like "new paradigm" and "new consensus" had been first applied to welfare reform and workfare proposals in 1987, as intellectuals and politicians once in the forefront of the social revolutions of the 60's began to realize that Ozzie and Harriet may have had more to offer—and big government less—than they once believed. Thus, a Left-liberal like Alan Wolfe, who had in the past looked to the Marxist transformation of society, could now be found gently defending the family and civil society in his book, *Whose Keeper?*, while an old child-care stalwart like Edward Zigler of Yale could be seen advocating child allowances and parental choice as an alternative to the intrusive provisions of ABC.

Two separate and radically divergent reports, which came out only twelve months apart, showed how quickly the new consensus took shape. In the summer of 1990, the National Research Council (NRC) issued *Who Cares for America's Children? Child-Care Policy for the 1990's.* The NRC report was a typical product of the iron triangle. It acknowledged that parents prefer informal family day care to center care. It accepted that center care in particular was beset by recurring problems of too high costs, too little flexibility and convenience, too many difficulties in meeting the needs of infants, older schoolchildren, and the handicapped, too many sick children, too low wages, and too high turnover. It also warned that, for centers to help those children to whom they *were* suited, they had to offer consistent and loving care provided by an ample staff of highly trained and personally devoted teachers. Yet it confessed that in order to ensure such care, centers would have to pay teachers more while charging parents less.

Having described a form of child care which clearly had little to offer anybody except social-service agencies in search of compensatory care for neglected ghetto children and a few relatively affluent parents in search of a nice nursery school for their preschoolers, the NRC panel glibly concluded that the government, ideally, ought to sponsor day care as the solution to the ills of America's parents and children.

The NRC's one sensible recommendation was parental leave to care for infants, a policy which has had unexpectedly benign effects in Scandinavia (where paid leave ranges from six months to eighteen months in duration). Its recommendations for older children were simply silly. In the absence of even enough money to subsidize center care of reasonable, much less superior, quality, the NRC proposed that the government enact regulations which would forbid parents to use "bad" care, regardless of cost or convenience. Worse, it had the gall to name informal family day care—cheap, flexible, good, and preferred by parents—as one of the kinds of bad care that should be denied subsidy. It also recommended that the government encourage more parents to work, so that the problem for which it had no solution could grow rather than shrink! In short, the NRC was an object lesson in the construction of a perfect policy cul-de-sac.

The very next summer, in 1991, the National Commission on Children, chaired by Senator John D. Rockefeller IV (D.-W.Va.), released its own report. Significantly titled *Beyond Rhetoric: A New American Agenda for Children and Families*, it appeared to be worlds away from the NRC report. The commission's members came from across the policy spectrum, from Marian Wright Edelman of the Children's Defense Fund on the Left to Allan Carlson of the Rockford Institute on the Right. The report claimed that its recommendations (with the important exception of national health insurance) were, amazingly, adopted unanimously.

A "populist" answer to the iron-triangle thinking of the NRC, the Rockefeller report got things right from the beginning. It correctly identi-

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fied the basic problem as structural changes in the family exacerbated by economic stagnation; the proper object of policy as the child; and the proper solution as the restoration of the intact nuclear family and an ethics of parental responsibility. It talked hard talk about crime, teenage pregnancy, divorce, and the importance of parents.

That being said, many of the Rockefeller report's recommendations were as dreamy as anything the iron triangle ever thought up. They were populist, to be sure, but in the wrong way. Were day-care teachers, social workers, and schoolteachers paid too little? The answer was vapid: "They will be paid more when we value them more." Were American families felled by crushing hospital bills? The answer was simple: enact national health insurance. The liberals on the commission had clearly not read the economic literature on care-giving (especially the meticulous work of Victor Fuchs on the structural forces depressing day-care wages), nor had they, evidently, heard the news from Scandinavia and Eastern Europe that political will is no match for economic reality.

There was a further problem. Despite its sensible support for a $1,000 tax credit for each child, the liberal majority on the Rockefeller commission did not really come out in favor of making it easier for parents to choose to care for their own children. It recommended more funding of the 1990 child-care programs, effectively subsidizing working parents at the expense of a greater tax burden on stay-at-home parents.

Most seriously of all, some of the Rockefeller provisions would, despite the pro-family rhetoric, discourage marriage and work. Under the influence of Marian Wright Edelman, for example, the commission proposed that the government pay single mothers who could not collect support from the child's father. What it did not mention was that such a proposal would amount to a backdoor welfare increase of nearly 40 percent for an unmarried welfare mother of two, who would receive a $2,870-to-$4,500 annual rise in income as opposed to the $2,550 a poor working two-parent family with two children would get from the earned-income tax credit and child credit combined.

IN SHORT, if the Rockefeller report understood the problem, when it came to concrete solutions it fell back on too many of the same old impracticalities and misguided incentives. It is not hard to see why. As Professor William Galston put it,

> For decades, the revolution in the American family evoked a polarized reaction: liberals talked about structural economic pressures facing families and avoided issues of personal conduct, and conservatives did just the reverse. Liberals habitually reached for bureaucratic responses, even when they were counterproductive, and conservatives reflexively rejected government programs even when they would work.

The new consensus had finally asked the right questions, then, about what was wrong with the family, and had even come to the right conclusions about the policy goal. For the first time in 30 years, members of the Democratic policy elite had broken silence on the consequences of the reckless social experiments of the 60's and 70's, and joined with conservatives and Republicans to forge, in Galston's words, "a non-bureaucratic, choice-based public activism" free of the "frequently cumbersome and intrusive institutions of the welfare state."

But the struggle to define this new public activism has only begun, and (as the example of the Rockefeller report suggests) many are the battles to be fought—especially over the exact role of government—before anything like a functioning policy can be put in place. Already there are signs that the intra-party Democratic revolt may be in danger, as the current recession encourages dreams of a return to government handouts. One can only hope that in the ensuing debate, everyone concerned remembers that the *proper* role of government is not to hinder but to support, wherever possible, the restoration of the functioning family.

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Yiddish on Screen

David G. Roskies

At the age of fourteen, surrounded by an audience of viewers fifty to sixty years my seniors, I saw a prewar Yiddish talkie called *Neighbors* at the Jewish Public Library in Montreal. I remember being bowled over by the movie's hit song, "Sex Appeal," sung by the romantic lead at a New Year's Eve ball.

That summer, accompanying my parents to Cape Cod, I got my first lesson in the troubled history of Yiddish film. One evening, at a theater in Provincetown that specialized in foreign films, the man at the box office heard us speaking Yiddish and invited us up for tea after the show. His name was Mr. Schaeffer, and before the war, living in Warsaw, he had been in the movie-making business. He told us how the success of *The Dybbuk* in 1937 had led him to believe that there was a growing market for quality Yiddish films, and that Poland was the right place to make them.

It so happened that the hit of the '38 season was a Polish musical comedy. Mr. Schaeffer decided to buy the world distribution rights for a version that he would dub into Yiddish. Not knowing the language himself, he hired a Yiddish littérateur to translate the dialogue, and the best actors of the Warsaw Yiddish stage to dub the lines. The movie was released later that same year under a new name. But Mr. Schaeffer had not counted on the Polish government, which banned the film outright to avoid the scandal of Polish movie stars "speaking" Yiddish on the silver screen. He had no better luck in America, where his hopes of recouping his losses were dashed when New York Jewish audiences turned away in droves from the outrageous spectacle of Polish Gentiles speaking their beleaguered mother tongue.

This, it turned out, was the very movie that had so thrilled my adolescent sensibilities. Since at that age I had some movie-making ambitions of my own, I was hardly prepared to learn the lesson of Mr. Schaeffer's aborted career. Yet what his sad story might have taught me was that even at a time when millions of Jews still spoke the language, and even in a medium that transcended political and cultural boundaries, Yiddish could not escape the precarious fate of the Jewish people. Moreover, divorced from *yiddishkayt*, from the warp and woof of its religious and cultural heritage, Yiddish held no great attraction even for Jews themselves; they could take it or leave it.

Neighbors was not among the more than 60 Yiddish films, lovingly restored and resubtitled, that ran from mid-November through mid-January at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. But something of my adolescent fervor was in the air on the opening night of "Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds." Suddenly Yiddish loomed on the screen as a bridge not only across space but across time as well. Starting off the program was a snippet from *Taxi* (1932), which showed the Irish-American actor James Cagney (who had learned the language as a child from his Jewish friends) speaking Yiddish to the delight of a greenhorn and the consternation of a New York Irish cop. This was followed by a beautifully restored print of Joseph Green's upbeat musical, *Yidl mitn fidl* (1936), starring the irrepressible Molly Picon, singing, in turn, original lyrics by the greatest of Yiddish folk bards, Itzik Manger. Adding to the festivities was the presence of Joseph Green himself, who accepted a standing ovation, and a number of other former stars of the Yiddish screen. After the speeches and the screening, a *klezmer* band performed in the museum's Garden Hall and the invited guests helped themselves to, among other things, what was probably the largest mound of whitefish salad ever assembled outside a movie set.

America may not have done well by Mr. Schaeffer, but only in America, I thought, would a young freelancer (Sharon Pucker Rivo) get it into her head to rescue and restore prewar Yiddish movies, and, after being rebuffed as an outsider by the Yiddish cultural establishment, set up her own archive at Brandeis University and make it into the largest repository of Jewish film in the world. Only in America would major foundations underwrite a film critic (J. Hoberman, of the *Village Voice*) to sit at Brandeis to research the history of Yiddish movies. Only in America would an elite museum co-publish the resulting book, *Bridge of Light: Yiddish Film Between Two Worlds*,* mount its own exhibition on the subject, and launch the first comprehensive Yiddish film retrospective complete with original piano scores for the silent features. And only in present-day America would some-

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* Museum of Modern Art/Schocken, 401 pp., $40.00.

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thing so ephemeral as old movies and something so passé as Yiddish be feted as priceless cultural treasures.

Certainly, in the imaginary place Hoberman calls *Yiddishland* (the phrase was invented by the scholar Benjamin Harshav), movies did not count for very much. For native-speaking audiences, according to a film-maker quoted by Hoberman, "Yiddish film was *tsholnt* [a stew eaten only on the Sabbath], never bread." It would be more correct to say that Yiddish film was marzipan, since even committed Jews (like my own parents), who lived and dreamed in Yiddish, could go through life without ever having seen a Yiddish movie. They went to the Yiddish theater, which to be sure supplied all the actors and most of the screenplays for the movies, but when the theater fell into decline, seeing celluloid revivals of a stale repertoire held few charms for Yiddish cultural activists.

Precisely because Yiddish had no land, the production and distribution of its movies were at the mercy of local conditions. Hoberman is good at conjuring up the rough-and-tumble world of entrepreneurs, cameramen, Communists, and theatrical families who tried to build a Yiddish movie empire by the banks of the Vistula and the Hudson. Like Hollywood, the land of Yiddish movies was a make-believe place. But (again like Hollywood) it was hardly immune to the world outside. Subject on the one hand to the pressures and vagaries of the marketplace, Yiddish films on the other hand were both a product and a mirror of the cataclysmic changes occurring in Jewish life, a life increasingly divided by geography and politics, plagued by mass defections from within and constant harassment from without.

EACH Yiddish cultural center—Poland, the Soviet Union, and America—produced a different cinematic response to the death of the old world and the birth of the new. In Poland, where the pace of change was the slowest, the *shtetl* or (Jewish) market town continued to serve as the preferred dramatic setting. As Hoberman shows, a surprising number of *shtetl* movies were filmed in historic Kazimierz, a favorite of Polish and Yiddish writers and artists since the turn of the century. The most famous, and still by far the greatest, is *The Dybbuk*.

The original play, written in Russian and Yiddish by the radical ethnographer S. Ansky against the backdrop of World War I, was completed during the Bolshevik Revolution. Celebrating the victory of spirit over matter, it tells the story of two star-crossed lovers, Khonon and Leah, and the failure of a wonder-working rabbi to exorcise their love. The screenplay (by Alter Kacyzne and Mark Arnshteyn) adds manifold layers of folklore and religious and mystical ritual to create a dreamlike pageant: thus, the movie recalls the precise formula for warding off an evil eye, the address of a wedding bard to the assembled guests, the prayer recited at the graveside, a Yiddish lovesong.

But it is the words and the melody of the biblical Song of Songs that tie together present and past, the living and the dead. Chanted first by Khonon's father to delight his rabbi, then by Khonon to express his sexual longing for Leah, and finally by Leah in front of *her* father, this haunting liturgical melody conjures up the multiple bonds of traditional Jewish life which, the movie suggests, have been irrevocably, tragically broken by history and fate.

No less striking than its metaphysical thrust is the movie's insistence on a Jewish standard of physical beauty. For Hoberman, the most erotically charged couple in the annals of Yiddish film are the Americans Helen Beverly and David Opatoshu in Edgar G. Ulmer's *Di klyatshe* (*The Nag*). But prewar Yiddish film offers models of a chaste and almost ascetic beauty, the most compelling examples of which may be Khonon and Leah of *The Dybbuk*. These were the physiognomies that Joseph Goebbels—his reaction to *The Dybbuk* is cited by Hoberman—found so repulsive that he succeeded in nearly eliminating them from the European continent. They survive today on the Yiddish screen.

IF THE purveyors of Yiddish culture in Poland knew how to invest the relics of the folk with a tragic sensibility, east of the Polish-Soviet border, Yiddish cultural activists had to struggle with a far more problematical relationship to their *shtetl* past. At MOMA, the world premiere of two restored films starring Solomon Mikhoels, the Laurence Olivier of Soviet Yiddish theater, revealed the price that had to be paid for any semblance of Yiddish culture to survive under Stalin.

The credits for the silent feature *Yidishe glikn* (*Jewish Luck*, 1925) read like a who's who of Soviet revolutionary art: directed by Alexander Granovsky, the founder of the Moscow Yiddish Art Theater; filmed by Eduard Tisse, who also brought us *The Battleship Potemkin* and others of Sergei Eisenstein's masterpieces; sets designed by the avant-garde artist Natan Altman; Russian titles provided by the great Soviet Jewish writer Isaac Babel.

Loosely based on the adventures of Menakhem-Mendl, Sholem Aleichem's peripatetic schlemiel, the screenplay takes the main character from *shtetl* to big city and back again. It creates a documentary effect by sparing none of the mud, the crooked alleys, the ramshackle houses, and the corrupt czarist officials that once characterized Jewish life in the "Pale of Settlement." In a justly famous dream sequence, the film also exposes the "typical" *shtetl* mind. In between financial failures, the harebrained Menakhem-Mendl falls asleep in a third-class train compartment and dreams of setting up an elaborate international export industry of . . . Jewish brides! It is a measure of Mikhoels's genius that by the end of this movie, which essentially exploits the finely balanced, tragicomic writings of Sholem Aleichem for satiric ends, the hapless matchmaker has been transformed into a Chaplinesque figure of universal resonance.

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Mikhoels was soon forced to sing a more explicit tune. In *Nathan Becker Goes Home* (1932), the first (and last) Yiddish sound film made in the USSR, the great actor-director plays a doddering idiot father to his son, Nathan Becker, a former bricklayer in New York City who has "returned home" during the Depression to lend his talents (and those of his black American buddy, Jim) to building Communism. Because there is, in fact, no home to come back to, the *shtetl* having become a place of the living dead, the Becker family and friend pack up for the frontier city of Magnitogorsk, where they lay bricks happily ever after. Hoberman finds Mikhoels's performance "delightful," but most of the capacity audience I saw the movie with at MOMA walked out before this monstrous piece of Stalinist agitprop was over.

IT IS sad to compare Papa Becker's cloying, repetitive singsong, the movie's stand-in for the "folk traditions" still preserved by *shtetl* fathers, with the hijinks of Mikhoels's performance just seven years earlier in *Jewish Luck*. But at MOMA, the screening of *Nathan Becker* also provided an even more grotesque "flash forward": the film was preceded by a Soviet newsreel made in 1941, right after the Nazi-Soviet pact was broken by the German invasion of Russia, and entitled "An Appeal to the Jews of the World." In it, Mikhoels appears alongside the Yiddish poet Peretz Markish (co-author of the *Nathan Becker* screenplay) and the director Sergei Eisenstein to deliver an impassioned plea for a world Jewish campaign, led by the courageous Jews lucky enough to be enjoying the blessings of Communism in the Soviet fatherland, against the Brown Beast of fascism. One cannot exactly accuse Mikhoels of bad faith here, yet one cannot fail to be horrified at the transparent puppetry of his performance. When he had to, Mikhoels portrayed the *shtetl* Jew as a fossil; when he was asked to, he portrayed the Soviet Jew as a Maccabeean warrior. For this, and other services rendered to the state, he was run over and killed by order of Stalin on January 13, 1948.

BY FAR the richest Yiddish film offerings at MOMA were those produced not in Poland or in the Soviet Union but in America, from the golden years of the silent era to Joseph Seiden's romantic comedy *Three Sisters* (1950). Much can be enjoyed today as "camp"; as a relic of a time when vaudeville was in flower; as a record of Jewish acculturation; or as a vibrant and often zany expression of Yiddish popular culture. Hoberman, in the thrall of *auteur* theory, waxes eloquent over the cinematic "vision" of Joseph Seiden and especially Edgar G. Ulmer, but for ordinary viewers it is surely the actor-director Maurice Schwartz, whose career in the movies offers a strange counter to that of Solomon Mikhoels, who defines the medium *and* the message of American Yiddish cinema.

As the romantic lead on horseback in Sidney Godin's silent *Yisker* (filmed in Austria, 1924, and based on a production by Schwartz's stage company, the Yiddish Art Theater), Schwartz cuts a ridiculous figure, a Jewish caricature on screen. But in 1932, the same Depression year that saw the release in the Soviet Union of *Nathan Becker Goes Home*, Schwartz starred in *Uncle Moses*, an American-Jewish classic by any measure. Like *The Rise of David Levinsky*, Abraham Cahan's great novel, *Uncle Moses* (from a novel by Sholem Asch) is about the price of acculturation. In the screenplay, whose dialogue was written by Schwartz, the very language suggests the breakdown of traditional values as the sweatshop owner Uncle Moses (played by Schwartz) switches from Moses-figure to godfather-figure, from the comforting familiarities of Yiddish, which he uses to mask his exploitation of his workers, to an Americanese designed to show who's boss. Schwartz's body language, too, speaks volumes, as in a single gesture he moves from the ingratiating sentimentality of a son of the *shtetl* to the arrogance of an "alrightnik."

Uncle Moses was an artifact of the early 30's. By the late 30's, with the rise of Hitler rapidly encroaching on the minds and hearts of American Jews, the *shtetl* past was being revived as a means of working through the trauma of helplessness and guilt. On a potato farm in New Jersey, Schwartz began filming Sholem Aleichem's *Tevye the Dairyman*. If, for Mikhoels and the other shock troops of the Soviet revolution, Sholem Aleichem's story of Menakhem-Mendl had provided evidence of tradition's decline, to the surviving Yiddishists in America the same author's Tevye would provide proof of Judaism's staying power. In this 1939 movie Schwartz, playing his greatest role, indulges in biblical and liturgical passages galore, delivering the ancient lines so quickly and effortlessly that one might think the very words of tradition could restore a sense of wholeness to the world.

But then, cutting in the opposite direction, are Tevye's daughters. The screenplay, like the stories on which it is based, focuses on Chava, the daughter who runs off with a Gentile. The scene in which Tevye returns home after failing to retrieve Chava, ushers out the Sabbath, and then commences to sit *shiva* for his apostate child, mourning her as if she were dead, throws out across the generations and across all linguistic barriers a heartrending cry at the fracture of group solidarity, at a time when the need for group solidarity had never been greater.

IN RETROSPECT, Maurice Schwartz can be said to have defined a norm in American Jewish culture. On the one hand, he spawned such actors as Paul Muni, who in films as diverse as *Scarface* (1932) and *The Life of Emile Zola* (1937) showed how much he owed to his training in Schwartz's Yiddish Art Theater; but Muni in the end belongs to Hollywood, not to Yiddish. On the other hand, Schwartz also fostered such younger talents as Helen Beverly and David Opatoshu, who tried to import the Revolution to America through the left-wing Artef Theater, and brought a Communist-inspired message to the Yid-

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dish screen. Between these two pulls, the popular Yiddish stage and screen could not hold the center; even Schwartz could not singlehandedly keep Yiddish alive, especially without benefit of state support, without medals and accolades from the Great Leader, without the party faithful to fill his theater and defend his cause.

Still, he seized whatever opportunities America afforded, and left a legacy in a medium that was never meant to last. As the run of movies at MOMA suggests, moreover, the fact that Yiddish film has survived to be seen at all today is, ironically, thanks only to those quintessentially American qualities of free enterprise and the sentimental attachment to lost causes.

My Bout With Affirmative Action

Timothy Maguire

I CAME out of my encounter with the politically correct all right, I guess. I was graduated from Georgetown University Law Center (GULC), as the Georgetown law school is called, in spite of calls for my expulsion. I received only one death threat. And I got lots of publicity, which I have tried to use to my advantage (for example by writing this article).

Nevertheless, the response to "Admissions Apartheid," the exposé I wrote last spring of the racial preferences in the admissions program of GULC, was the most depressing experience of my academic career. This response revealed that a policy, whose fairness and wisdom are doubtful, has remained in force not on its merits but through the suppression of any criticism of its flaws. And the response also raised questions about the honesty and integrity of the administrators of GULC's affirmative-action programs.

In "Admissions Apartheid," which was published in our law-school student paper, I used a random sample of applications to GULC to generalize about the respective credentials of blacks and whites who were ultimately admitted. According to that sample, the average white student accepted by GULC had a score of 43 on the Law School Aptitude Test (LSAT) out of a possible 48 on the scale then in use; his average black counterpart had a score of 36. The average white student accepted by the school had maintained an undergraduate grade-point average (GPA) of 3.7; for the average black, the figure was 3.2. In addition to exposing these disparities, "Admissions Apartheid" also rejected such familiar explanations for them as hostile environments, lack of role models, and biased curriculums—most pointedly by noting levels of achievement at historically-black colleges. At Grambling, for instance, 84 percent of those students who took the LSAT ended up in the bottom 10 percent of test-takers nationwide.

The article was, admittedly, a provocation. It was written in a tone which could fairly be described as mean-spirited. And it was based on student records which I had been hired to file, not to analyze for the purposes of an exposé. Nevertheless, "Admissions Apartheid" did call the attention of the Georgetown community to a major institutional problem which had previously been ignored.

Not that efforts were not made to continue ignoring it. On the contrary, there was a concerted attempt to prevent all questioning of the school's admissions policies. Thus the Georgetown Black Law Student Association demanded that I, and the entire editorial board of the student paper, be expelled, and in statements to the national press, it compared my article to anonymous hate notes which had recently been sent to black Yale law students. Thus, too, the dean of the school, Judith Areen, had a letter placed in every student's mail folder in which, among other things, she criticized the paper for printing this "misleading mix of opinion and data" without first verifying the accuracy of its findings.

Yet Dean Areen did not explain what was inaccurate in my article. Instead she asserted that GULC need not discuss disparities in qualifications between its white and black students because the school's reputation had grown since the institution of affirmative action; because this discussion might cause people to judge individual members of the benefited groups; and because all students at Georgetown are "qualified to meet the standards to graduate." All this, while declaring that Georgetown was not trying to stifle discussion of controversial matters.

THE attack on me, combined with the refusal to respond to my article's allegations, did more to dis-

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credit the school and divide the student body than anything I had written. Officials like Areen fervently decried the racial tensions raised by my piece. But they themselves repeatedly compounded these tensions. They ordered the confiscation of every copy on school grounds of the offending issue of the student paper, thereby denying students their opportunity to read an article which would be discussed every day in Washington's newspapers. And while deploring the "hurt" caused by my article, they ignored instances of politically-correct intimidation of students who felt that the school should explain how its affirmative-action policies worked.

Then there was Dean Areen's public claim that consideration of race was not a part of the school's admissions process, and that her main concern was the confidentiality of applications. Yet within days of this claim, it was revealed that one of the school's most-renowned professors, Father Robert Drinan, had once put statistical comparisons of minority and white GULC students on the blackboard as part of a class in constitutional law. Like me, Drinan had found "significant differences" in the grades and test scores of whites and minorities. Contrary to what one would think from the administration's statements, then, I had not released information which had been guarded as zealously as that pertaining to the manufacture of atomic bombs.

It turned out, moreover, that my random sample had understated the race-based disparities at the school. In 1989, the median LSAT for incoming white students at GULC was 42; for incoming blacks it was 33, "up from 32 last year." Nor was this extreme disparity confined to Georgetown: exactly the same figures obtained at the University of Texas Law School. And the most recently reported average LSAT score for whites admitted to all American law schools was 36; for blacks it was 28.

Indeed, it is generally conceded that less than 1 percent of top law-school student bodies would be black under race-blind admissions. To cite only one instance, the director of admissions at the University of California Law School at Berkeley noted several years ago that, *nationwide*, "only five blacks who took the LSAT had scores and GPA's that equaled [Berkeley's] average." Yet blacks are represented at many law schools in greater numbers than they are represented among college graduates. This can be accomplished only through a process of insulating blacks from competition with better-qualified whites and applying much lower standards to black applicants.

Thomas Sowell and others have shown how admitting underqualified blacks to elite undergraduate programs harms the intended beneficiaries, who do badly against the stiff competition of some of the best students in the country, when they would do well in schools to whose standards they were better matched. It should be noted that, for a number of reasons, those consequences are *magnified* at law schools. First, law schools contain no academic ghettos to which less-qualified students can be directed; the student with the lowest LSAT score spends his first year taking the same courses as the student with the highest, and most likely finishes the year at the bottom of the class. Second, law schools are trade schools, providing neither sports programs, social activities, nor nonacademic extracurricular challenges to replenish self-esteem lost through academic underperformance. Third, since law firms and bar examiners are (as yet) unwilling to lower their standards for individuals who fail to learn the trade, the time such individuals spend in law school can be wasted.

LAST spring, the Washington *Post* columnist, William Raspberry, while supporting color-conscious affirmative action, expressed concern about the legitimacy of automatic racial preferences. He noted that "fairness is the ultimate test and . . . it is time to put the issue on the table."

Raspberry's concern is widely shared. Overwhelmingly, it is true, Americans would like selection processes to take more than naked test scores into account. But a dual system of criteria based solely on race strikes most Americans of all races as offensive. For under such a system, the daughter of an unmarried white salesclerk is less likely to be admitted to a law program (for example) than the son of a wealthy black politician. And this is true even if she has a 39 LSAT score and a 3.25 grade-point average while he has a 36 LSAT score and a 3.0 GPA.

In fact, while law schools supposedly follow the dual system for the sake of fairness to people who have been hampered by discrimination and other obstacles, there is no indication that they take any steps to provide fair treatment of less-privileged applicants as such. For example, no attempt is made to ensure "adequate" representation of Evangelical Christians—who are less esteemed, and less well represented in positions of influence, than America's blacks.

To be sure, law-school administrators often claim that, rather than applying race-based dual systems of admissions, they merely "look beyond the numbers" where all candidates are concerned. But this is implausible in light of the fact that the only applicants regularly admitted with credentials well below institutional norms are blacks—and members of other accredited minority groups.

Speaking of other minority groups, the rationale for giving them special preference is to create ethnic "diversity." Yet it is unclear why proportional ethnic representation is desirable, and it has been argued (most eloquently by Thomas Sowell) that nowhere in the world does such representation occur naturally.

Be that as it may, the danger in looking "beyond the numbers" is that law-school administrators will use the selection process to forge student bodies *un*representative of the general American population—as unrepresentative as they themselves are. These administrators, like the faculties over which they preside, are, as a group, politically liberal and secular. They tend to see law as a means of social

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change rather than as a trade, often have practiced little law themselves (except for appellate clerkships), and not rarely have contempt for commercial firms. The personal essays students submit as part of the law-school application process suggest that in hopes of impressing evaluators, applicants often represent themselves as public-service-minded rather than as looking forward to private practice, and take the liberal position on volatile legal issues like abortion, affirmative action, and the rights of criminal defendants.

"So WHAT?," one student commented on my piece. GULC's admissions program may have been unfair, but life was unfair. And historically life in America has been more unfair to blacks than to whites. Yet racial preferences are not merely unfair to those excluded by them. They also have effects that touch the entire law-school communities in which they are aggressively pursued.

Group preferences require that selectors be less selective with some groups than others. But it is axiomatic that the more selective one is in filling a position, the stronger the candidate who fills that position will be. At GULC, for example, administrators strive for a 1:1 gender ratio. Yet more men than women apply to the school. Georgetown is therefore somewhat more selective toward its male candidates, with the result that two-thirds of the magna cum laude graduates in my class were men.

The most extreme disparities between male and female students are multiplied five and tenfold between white and black students at prestigious law schools. The consequence is that black affirmative-action beneficiaries are routinely outperformed by white students. They almost never obtain "race-blind" invitations to the most prestigious student journals. Their success in moot-court competition is often assured only by all-black moot-court teams. They regularly complain that the better firms do not hire them because such firms refuse to look beyond grades (in my graduating class, only one out of about 60 black students graduated in the scholastic top third of the class).

Unfortunately, reforms cannot be undertaken in the present law-school environment, because the problem cannot be openly addressed. Since the truth about present practices makes black students and their empowered defenders uncomfortable, everyone is forced either to ignore these issues or to live a lie. And as I discovered from the response to "Admissions Apartheid," affirmative action not only promotes lying, it fosters the sort of name-calling, along with threats against innocent persons merely for associating with the targets of the attack, that were so notoriously characteristic of McCarthyism.

THUS, having been branded a "racist," I found it difficult to obtain legal representation in fighting the move to expel me. When two members of the faculty of the D.C. School of Law, Robert Catz and Thomas Mack, stepped forward to aid the organization managing my defense, I assumed that they opposed affirmative action and that the D.C. School of Law was a more open-minded institution than Georgetown.

My assumptions were wrong. Both Catz and Mack disagreed with my position on affirmative action, but both believed that Georgetown was treating me unfairly, and both thought that no person should be denied legal representation merely because he is politically incorrect. As for my second assumption, the D.C. School of Law turned out to be just as closed-minded as Georgetown. Its dean ordered Catz and Mack not to represent me, and the students there advocated sanctioning them for assisting in my defense.

But Catz and Mack held firm, and thanks to the help of people like them, I was able to graduate with my class. A settlement was reached under which my punishment was restricted to a letter reprimanding me for having breached a duty of nondisclosure. Georgetown students promptly denounced the administration for showing me "favoritism," and black alumni protested at our graduation ceremony. As for the Georgetown administration, its purpose in settling the case was to end what had become a public-relations fiasco—so that it could then continue following its detrimental and unfair admissions policies without any further disturbance from troublemakers like me.

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America-Bashing

ANTI-AMERICANISM: CRITIQUES AT HOME AND ABROAD, 1965-1990. By PAUL HOLLANDER. *Oxford University Press. 531 pp. $35.00.*

Reviewed by MARK FALCOFF

AFTER the cold war, what does the Left have left? The answer would seem to be anti-Americanism. Indeed, ever since the end of the conflict in Vietnam this may well have been the only *real* ideology of the Western Left, but only now, with the disappearance of Communism, can we see the matter clearly. How else, after all, to explain the assortment of pacifists, environmental activists, "anti-racists," and self-appointed social critics in France, Germany, and the United States who were falling all over themselves a year and a half ago to excuse the conduct of a certified fascist in Iraq whose crimes included not merely torture, massive extinction of minorities, and suppression of his own domestic Left, but also the uninhibited use of oil pollution as a military weapon? Would these people have been so anxious to appease Saddam Hussein had he been an *ally* rather than an adversary of the United States?

These are the sorts of questions addressed in *Anti-Americanism*, a massive and at times unwieldy tome in which the sociologist Paul Hollander struggles with a subject admittedly elusive and yet too pervasive to be ignored. As in his justly acclaimed *Political Pilgrims* (1981), Hollander here takes us on a long tour through the adversary culture, first in the United States and then in other countries. His basic point is that anti-Americanism flourishes most vigorously in the United States itself; almost all of the foreign varieties are merely pallid (though sometimes bizarre) offshoots. As one prominent Swedish journalist put it, "I have tried to find some critiques of the United States that [are] uniquely Swedish, but I have not found a single opinion, a single nuance, that has not already been expressed [first] by American critics."

The first half of *Anti-Americanism* is, therefore, a kind of *catalogue raisonné* of the domestic varieties of the phenomenon. Hollander believes that anti-Americanism at home is no longer politically eccentric; rather, since Vietnam the Left has effectively taken control of culture in the United States. "What was once daring and unconventional criticism and a form of nonconformity, and as such noteworthy, is today self-evident truth in many subgroups, settings, and enclaves of our society"—particularly the universities, the churches, and the media. Their message is that "no society can be inferior to this one and there are no deformities of social institutions and political behavior which do not flourish in the United States."

It is in the refusal to compare the United States with other countries, except in ways intended to reflect unfavorably upon it, that normal social dissidence is elevated to something like national self-hatred. To be sure, the line between the two has never been entirely clear in the United States, since uniquely among nations it is a "proposition country": it has no history or identity apart from certain 18th-century political notions embodied in its Constitution and common law. If most ordinary Americans instinctively understand this, their more privileged compatriots seem to have difficulty with it. No doubt Governor Michael Dukakis was genuinely shocked at the response to his nonchalant attitude toward the Pledge of Allegiance in the 1988 presidential campaign; nobody *he* knew took it seriously.

The uproar over the Pledge of Allegiance points to a crucial aspect of Hollander's study: while it is obviously true that the American Left has not succeeded in imposing its political agenda on the country, it is no less true that the Left has periodically managed to introduce some of its notions into the mainstream cultural debate. For example, what might be called a soft-Left perspective now informs most of the reporting on world affairs in the prestige press and electronic media (where a "story" almost always establishes the culpability of U.S. policy, even in countries where Washington has never exercised much influence); the pronouncements of the major Protestant churches; and much of the output of serious book publishing (both trade houses and university presses) as well as many periodicals (*Harper's*, *Esquire*, etc.).

Much of this cannot be news to anyone who has been following cultural developments in the United States over the last two decades, but it is useful to have so much of it on record. A tireless researcher, Hollander has combed the pages of both the mainstream and the adversary press, and anyone who imagines that he is exaggerating will simply have to come to terms with his abundant data.

WHEN he focuses on other countries, Hollander finds himself working furrows which have been turned over many times before. Thus, in Western Europe, propagators of anti-Americanism have long been found on both the Left and the Right since at least World War I. By no means are their views mutually exclusive—in the case of France alone, one cannot fail to note the convergence on this point between Vichy and the Gaullistes, Jean-Marie Le Pen of the National Front and the Socialist Jean-Pierre Chevènement. In the third world, anti-Americanism has been an integral part of the hand-me-down Marxism which has long served as a legitimizing ideology for newly independent African or Asian states, as it has done for third-rate Latin American politicians and in-

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tellectuals. If this sort of thing is wearing a bit thin these days, the "South" has yet to find an adequate replacement for it.

In a separate chapter on Mexican and Canadian intellectuals, Hollander manages to put a new gloss on the subject. The case of Canada is particularly interesting because it is a country that "owes its very existence to a conscious rejection of the American Dream." To be a nationalistic Canadian perforce compels one to be anti-American. The same is true of Mexico, which has lovingly nourished its territorial and other grudges against the United States since at least the middle of the 19th century.

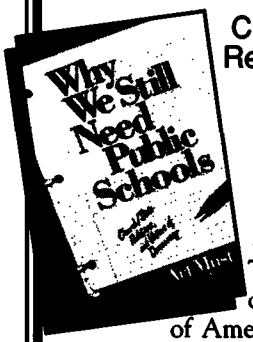
Though Hollander's survey of the two countries is necessarily fragmentary—many Canadian and Mexican intellectuals, convinced that he was "doing research for the CIA," refused to return his questionnaire—even his partial findings are striking. In Mexico, Ronald Reagan won the contest for "least admired" of 20th-century political leaders (16.5 percent), slightly besting Chile's General Augusto Pinochet (13.5 percent), and miles ahead of Adolf Hitler (5 percent)! If anything, the Canadians put Reagan even lower: 29 percent considered him the worst of the bunch, followed by Hitler (a distant second) with 10 percent. When the same sample was directly asked, "Which countries do you find the most unappealing," the Canadians put South Africa first (14 percent), but the U.S. tied with Israel for second (12 percent each), followed by Chile (9 percent), and, perhaps surprisingly, Cuba (5 percent). The Mexicans were less ambiguous: the U.S. was clearly the worst (17 percent), followed by Chile (14 percent), and, again perhaps surprisingly, the Soviet Union (10 percent).

To be sure, the Mexicans and Canadians who responded to Hollander's questionnaires were far from typical citizens; many of the "Canadians" were actually expatriate American academics, and thus anti-American twice over. Perhaps the extreme marginality of the intellectual class in both countries—certainly it counts for much less there than its counterparts in the United States and Western Europe—may explain the grotesque distortion of these perceptions. Since both countries are constantly being compared (or comparing themselves) to the United States, an extra element of antipathy may exist there which would be more attenuated by geographical and historical distance.

AT THIS juncture, what foreigners think about the United States has ceased to be very important. Since we are no longer engaged in a great strategic and political competition with the Soviet Union, if Peruvians or Palestinians, Swedes or Sudanese now choose to dislike our country (or what they imagine it to be), that is their problem, not ours. More troubling is the persistence of such sentiments within the United States. Hollander attributes domestic anti-Americanism to frustrated utopian urges, as well as to the "determined effort to find meaning in life" on the part of deracinated intellectuals or para-intellectuals. Then, too, social protest has become a form of status-seeking; to be a critic of or active protester against society "has come to offer a combination of idealistic self-assertion and security, political commitment and group support."

There is another catalyst which Hollander does not mention but which may be the most important of all: the radicalization of the major American foundations and, during periods of Democratic ascendancy in Congress or the White House, of government grant-giving agencies. For a growing number of Americans, left-wing activism has become a lucrative, upper-middle-class profession. This is an area which cries out for further attention; a sociologist as acute and as avid for hard data as Paul Hollander might well make it the subject of a book.

Why We Still Need Public Schools



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Who Was Jesus?

A MARGINAL JEW: RETHINKING THE HISTORICAL JESUS. VOLUME ONE: THE ROOTS OF THE PROBLEM AND THE PERSON. By JOHN P. MEIER. *Anchor-Doubleday. 484 pp. $25.00.*

Reviewed by HYAM MACCOBY

PERHAPS the most startling thing about John P. Meier's book on Jesus is that it has been published with the imprimatur of the Catholic Church. For this is a book, by an author who is himself a Catholic priest, that questions the historical truth of the Virgin Birth of Jesus, the perpetual virginity of Mary, the birth of Jesus in Bethlehem in a manger attended by Magi, and many other cherished beliefs of the Church. One wonders how many other iconoclastic revelations are to come in the projected second volume of this work.

Meier's avowed aim is to produce an account of the historical Jesus which would be approved by

HYAM MACCOBY*'s most recent work is* Paul and Hellenism. *His new book,* Judas Iscariot and the Myth of Jewish Evil, *will be published by the Free Press later this year.*

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a committee consisting of a Catholic, a Protestant, a Jew, and an agnostic, working to forge a "consensus document on who Jesus of Nazareth was and what he intended." On the question of who Jesus was, the conclusions of the present volume are that he was born in Nazareth (not in Bethlehem), of a family reputed to be descended from King David; that he spoke Aramaic and Hebrew, but little or no Greek or Latin; that he was literate, but not highly educated; that his family belonged to the lower middle class; that he was unmarried; and that he was a "layman" (i.e., not a priest).

As for "what [Jesus] intended," this is mostly reserved for the second volume, but some hints are given. Thus, from certain incidental remarks we may deduce that Meier accepts most of the Gospel accounts of Jesus' conflict with the Pharisees, despite the accumulated evidence that these accounts date from the post-Jesus era. Even the title, *A Marginal Jew*, suggests Meier's distance from what has been called "the Jewish view of Jesus," namely, that Jesus was a very representative Jew and Pharisee who, believing himself to be the messiah for whom the Jewish people were yearning, died as a martyr at the hands of Rome and the Roman-appointed high priest. Even an iconoclastic Christian scholar, it seems, must preserve the dogma of Jesus' alienation from the Jewish society of his day.

On the whole, however, the topics covered in this volume are treated with refreshing sensibleness and occasionally even courage. For example, Meier goes thoroughly into the question of the brothers and sisters of Jesus who are mentioned in the Gospels and have ever since proved an embarrassment to Christian commentators. The 4th-century writer Helvidius argued that these were indeed siblings in the literal sense; but the implication that Mary had normal sexual relations with Joseph after the birth of Jesus was too much for Jerome, who wrote a book to refute Helvidius, arguing that in Hebrew the word for "brother" can mean "cousin." In the Eastern Church, a different solution was

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found: the brothers were only half-brothers, being the children of Joseph by a previous marriage. Meier shows clearly the hollowness of these evasions, especially in the light of testimonies outside the New Testament about the existence of Jesus' brothers, including James, the leader of the Jerusalem Church, and Jude, reputed author of a canonical Epistle.

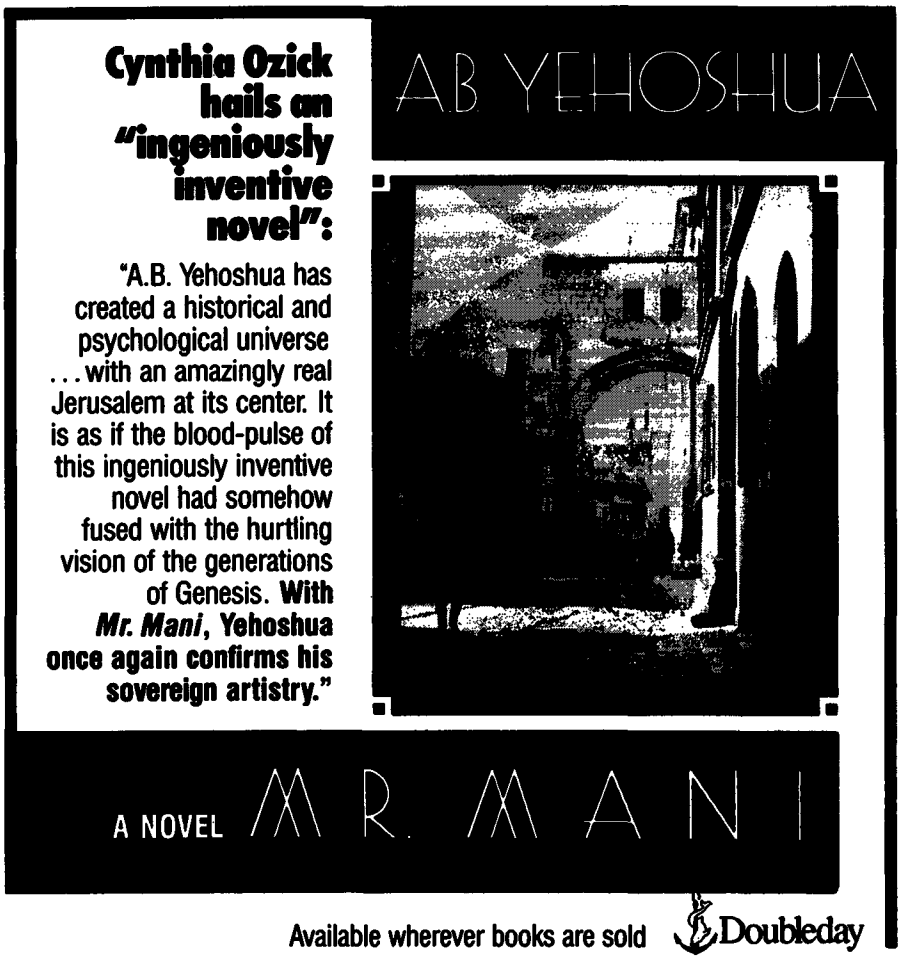
IN DEALING with the birth of Jesus himself, Meier—speaking, he is careful to stress, as a historian and not as a man of faith—points out that the Virgin Birth appears in only Matthew and Luke; its absence from the other two Gospels would seem to show that the doctrine was unknown to their authors. Then there are the Gospel passages indicating that Jesus' brothers did not believe in his mission during his public ministry, a fact "which hardly seems likely if they had known about his miraculous conception." As for an alleged Jewish prophecy that the messiah would be virgin-born—that, according to Meier, is unproved. The famous passage from Isaiah (7:14), quoted in the Gospels themselves, should not be translated, "A virgin shall conceive and bear a child," since the Hebrew word *'almah* does not mean "virgin" but "young woman." Even the Greek translation of *'almah* as *parthenos* proves nothing, for the word *parthenos* in Septuagint Greek (about 200 B.C.E.) does not necessarily mean "virgin": as Meier notes, the same word is used about Dinah after she has been raped (Genesis 34:3).

Such arguments, familiar in Jewish writings, are not often found in the work of Catholic authors. Meier even considers the charge, first reported in the *Contra Celsum* of Origen (about 248 C.E.), that Jesus was illegitimately born, though he correctly observes that this charge was probably a hostile or ribald reaction to the claim of Virgin Birth (a reaction which the Gospels themselves anticipate). Those predisposed not to accept the Virgin Birth as fact have always found it easy to explain away the idea that Joseph was not Jesus' father. An anecdote in the medieval Jewish pseudo-history, *Toledot Yeshu* ("Life of Jesus"), to the effect that Jesus was the son of a Roman soldier, was even welcomed by the Nazis as proving Jesus' non-Aryan origin. But the historian can conclude only that the Virgin Birth is a legend (and that therefore Jesus' father was in fact Joseph). The question then becomes one of tracing the source of the legend and its affinity to myths current in the Greco-Roman world.

Meier, however, refuses to allow that the Virgin Birth is derived from Hellenistic mythology; we look in vain in this book for an appreciation of the extent to which the Luke birth-narrative in particular was influenced by the myths of Mithras, Isis, and Horus. In a curious argument, he differentiates pagan myths, in which "the divine male takes the place of the human male in impregnating the woman," from the Christian affirmation of an asexual miracle brought about by the action of the Holy Spirit. Yet this distinction is put forward in a single paragraph, and receives nothing like the elaboration accorded, for example, to the problem of the date of Jesus' birth.

Moreover, the notes, so voluminous on other topics, have almost nothing to say on this one, and in particular omit all reference to scholars of the history-of-religions school who have dealt with the issue. A footnote merely remarks that the alleged virgin births of religious figures such as Krishna, Buddha, and Zoroaster are irrelevant to the Christian case since "it is highly unlikely that [such stories] were known by—much less acceptable as sources to—the early Christians." But as Howard Eilberg-Schwartz has recently argued, such parallels are indeed highly relevant, not because they show the historical origins of the Christian myth but because they show a common mythical tendency based on perennial human psychological needs.

As for the supposed difference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between sexual and asexual myths, virgin parturition without a male is in fact posited of pagan goddesses such as Astarte; and in any case, Hellenistic myths of divine impregnation were often imbued with spiritual meaning, while in the Judaic religions, human sexual activity has often been regarded as having a mystical affinity to divine love. Indeed, in speaking of Jesus as "begotten by God," and as "begotten not made," the Christian creeds may be said deliberately to stress the way in which the interconnection between God and Jesus was ineffably similar to that of human generation.

IT SEEMS, then, that Meier's willingness to play the historian while taking a holiday from faith does not extend to seeing the Christian story in a Hellenistic setting; in general, he prefers to set his story against a Jewish rather than a Greek backdrop. An example is Meier's treatment of the well-known contradiction between the claim of the Virgin Birth and the claim that Jesus was descended from David—since only Joseph, not Mary, was of Davidic descent. (Meier rightly rejects the time-honored solution that Mary, too, was of Davidic origin.) According to Meier this is really no problem, since in Jewish law and custom an adoptive father is regarded as the legal father in every way. Again he offers no support for this observation, either in his text or in the notes. In fact, however, there is no such thing as legal adoption in Jewish law (though guardianship has always been practiced), and the physical father cannot be legally supplanted by any person, certainly not in matters of descent and inheritance.

Still, despite the limits to Meier's historical objectivity, his book must be commended for its thorough treatment of many of the issues it raises, for its lively, readable style, and for its freedom from jargon. For a final judgment on his enterprise we await the publication of the second volume where Meier will confront the even more contentious issues of Jesus' mission and aims, and the reasons for his death.

Treating the Person

THE NATURE OF SUFFERING AND THE GOALS OF MEDICINE. By ERIC J. CASSELL. *Oxford University Press. 254 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by GILBERT MEILAENDER

MY MOTHER always said that Doctor B. was the best doctor ever to practice in the small town in Indiana where I grew up. In defense of that judgment she would invariably say, "He listened to mothers." And then she would go on to point out that, eventually, he took a position at the Mayo Clinic. These two facts—his insight and sensitivity as a clinician into the needs of patients, and his ability to secure a position at a place like the Mayo Clinic—were, in her mind, mutually supporting reasons for her judgment about the excellence of Doctor B.

When we pin Eric Cassell down, he seems to believe pretty much the same. Scientific knowledge of the mechanisms of disease is essential for physicians, but doctoring is also an art, and "the truly successful clinician must respect both aspects." These two kinds of knowledge must be "combined and brought to bear on the patient's illness."

Cassell is a well-known figure in the medical-ethics world, and himself bridges these two kinds of knowledge in his work as a clinical professor of public health at Cornell University Medical College and attending physician at New York Hospital. He develops his argument in twelve chapters which explain why our received understanding of disease is inadequate for the care of patients; discuss the importance of the doctor-patient relation in caring for those who suffer from illness; and put forward an enriched understanding of the person who becomes a recipient of medical care. The argument, though chiefly theoretical in nature, makes helpful use of case histories.

A reader may often be uncertain, however, whether Cassell is simply reasserting the truth that medicine is not only science but art, or whether he wants to claim more. At places he writes as if he were offering a bolder claim—that disease theory, whatever its scientific merits, has failed as a guide for physicians and that some kind of new framework or paradigm for the medical profession is needed. This new framework would focus chiefly on the sick person rather than the disease. Writing as a layman, I have to admit that I cannot find such a theory in this book. The book's central and insightful claims—which have to do with the relation of doctor and patient—might have been made more succinctly and clearly if separated from some of the theoretical baggage aimed at supporting the new framework. Moreover, any reader who comes in search of deepened understanding of the meaning of suffering will probably conclude that he was misled by the book's title. Nevertheless, there is much to be learned from this book—wisdom to be gained and worries to be pondered.

DISEASES do not exist apart from the persons who suffer them, and Cassell wants medicine to redirect its attention to those persons. On several occasions he notes, without really explaining, the peculiarity that medical education in recent years has attempted to give curricular attention to such humanistic concerns, but, in his judgment, without any real success. To doctors, diseases still seem more real than patients. What medicine needs—and what all of us who are potential patients therefore need—is a way of bridging the "two cultures" of the science and the art of medicine, of the scientist and the clinician, of universalizable knowledge about diseases and particular knowledge about the patient and his illness.

The relation between theory and practice—whether in medicine or in other endeavors—is, of course, a very old and complicated topic. Perhaps the relation must always remain somewhat mysterious. It is, therefore, no very great criticism to note that Cassell's pro-

GILBERT MEILAENDER, *a new contributor, is professor of religion at Oberlin College.*

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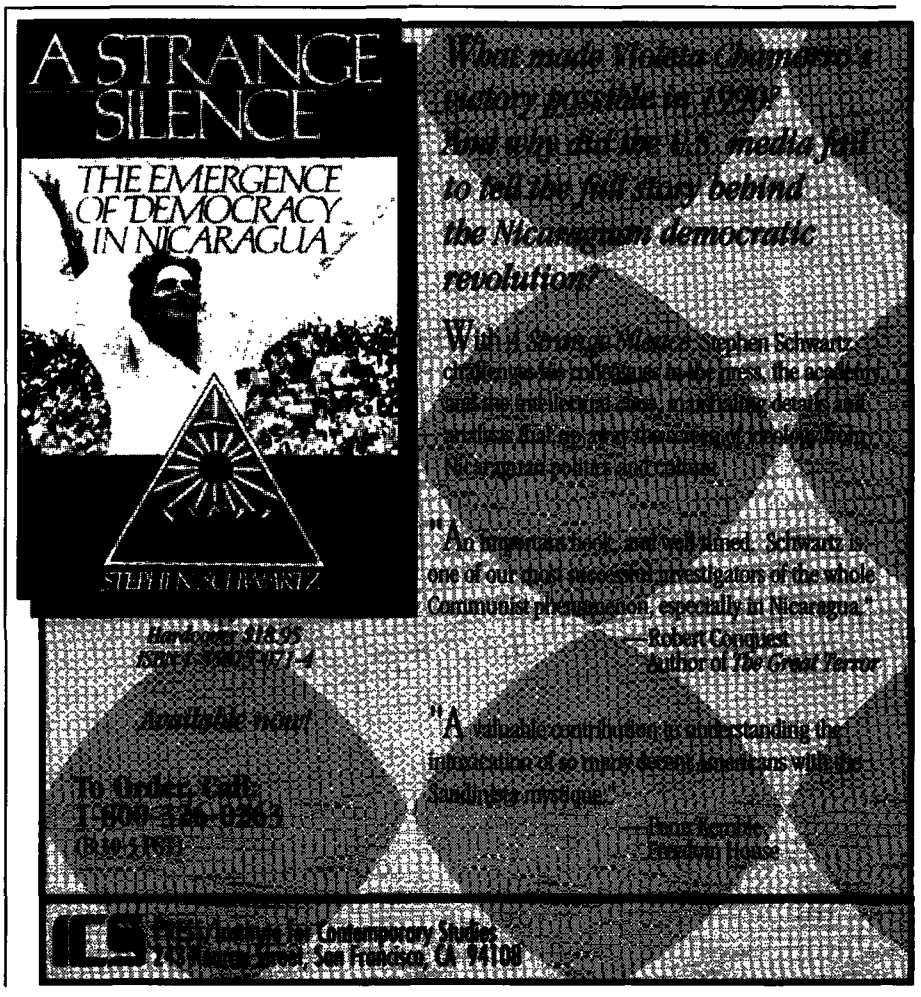
posed solution is difficult to grasp. On some occasions he sounds as if he were simply reworking the old Kantian claim that percepts without concepts are blind, and concepts without percepts are empty. Thus, for example, he will say that the doctor needs experience of many patients over time so that "knowledge interprets our experience while experience enriches our knowledge." Related to this is the book's recurring distinction between a universal knowledge about disease that science offers and a particular knowledge of illness in patients. When Cassell is thinking in this manner, he suggests that the physician's abstract, generalized knowledge of disease must be "applied" or "reparticularized" in his experience of the patient. And the experienced practitioner, with "knowledge amassed from years of experience treating similar patients," is the person who can do this reparticularizing.

HOWEVER often he writes in this way, I do not think this is the real Cassell. I would say that what he really means to argue is the necessity for the doctor to have, not so much experience of many patients, but empathic experience of *this* patient now before him. And this is quite a different claim—more an argument for what once was called "knowledge by acquaintance" rather than "knowledge by description." An understanding of the patient's suffering that cannot be reduced to formulas. Something as close as we can come actually to experiencing the patient's suffering from the inside, from the patient's perspective. Not knowledge *about* the patient's suffering, but a tasting *of* it. The clinician seeks an understanding so intimate that he "has experienced the patient's experience." This is why the physician is really his own instrument, why, as Cassell repeatedly emphasizes, there can be no substitute for the physician as person. Because he recommends such "empathic experiencing," such "immersion in the clinical experience," Cassell is aiming at something far more than the kind of application of theory that one learns through years of experience.

It will always be hard to describe the kind of knowledge Cassell is recommending. One might practice medicine for years and never have the ability to know in this way. Hence, I am a little doubtful about Cassell's claim that the ability for such empathic experiencing can be taught. At the very least, I did not find here many clues about how it is taught or learned. At one point, he does grant that only the "basic attributes" of the physician's virtues can be taught, while "in their best exemplification" they perhaps are not teachable. This emphasis does help to explain, however, one of the very interesting features of the book: Cassell's stress on illness as a story. (It also helps account for the reluctance of clinicians to think in general terms; they always return quickly to cases.) Change any of the details and a story—hence, an illness—changes. That is Cassell's argument. If he is correct, coming to know a patient's suffering cannot be entirely unlike learning to read a story with insight. Here again, however, we may be a little baffled about how this should be taught. One may need the help of the Muses.

ONCE we see that this is the real Cassell, we may start to worry that his new framework asks more of medical education—and physicians—than they can manage. That worry I set aside, however, in order to pay attention to another, related one. Cassell's understanding of medicine is very expansive. In his concern to move us away from thinking simply in terms of the body and disease, and toward focusing on the patient and his suffering, on, that is, the whole story of the person's life, Cassell begins to include almost everything under the rubric of medical care. (What a nightmare for a national-health program!) Granting the obvious, that my sickness may often not be entirely understandable apart from knowledge about the story of my life, there are reasons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to be wary of this expansive vision. If everything is medical, we claim too much for medicine and doctors. Cassell specifically criticizes an "anachronistic division of the human condition into what is medical . . . and what is nonmedical." This division, he continues, "has given medicine too narrow a notion of its calling."

But perhaps some modesty is in order. At first sight Cassell might seem to be turning us away from the hubris of modern medicine, away from its trust in technology's ability to counteract disease, and toward a more modest goal of being present with patients in their suffering. But I do not think his is a modest vision of medicine at all. Consider his claims. Change any details in the patient's story, and we effectively change that story. Proper treatment is whatever effectively changes the story. The active presence of the physician *is* the treatment, as the physician enters into the story, understands it, and seeks to bring some healing. This physician is a heroic figure—well nigh a savior.

We get here some sense of what it would really mean to think of medicine as a calling, and there is something very appealing in such a vision. Cassell writes powerfully of the steps a doctor must take to see to it that patients do not entirely lose hope. Even knowing that death is coming, the doctor heroically stands in the breach, not abandoning the patient, continually taking steps to demonstrate that something—however small it seems—can still be done to relieve suffering. "When pain is absolutely intractable, the doctor will call a consultant; in another city or another country, if necessary." In a time when euthanasia proponents are asking doctors to abandon such commitment, we ought to be grateful for what Cassell has to say, and it may seem unkind to quarrel. And, to be sure, there is great power in his depiction of the doctor's commitment to nonabandonment of patients.

Despite all its appeal and importance, however, I think it claims too much and misidentifies the true healer. "The doctor-patient relationship is the vehicle through which the relief of suffering is achieved." If that is the ground of our hope in the face of suffering, we are greatly to be pitied. And if we ask that of our physicians, we ask of them more than is within their power. Between a purely technical and contractual understanding of medicine, against which Cassell rebels, and the redemptive, salvific alternative he advocates, there ought to be some middle ground. As present and future sufferers, let us hope that it can be found.

Pro & Contra

COMANDOS: THE CIA AND NICARAGUA'S CONTRA REBELS. By SAM DILLON. *Holt. 393 pp. $27.50.*

Reviewed by STEPHEN SCHWARTZ

With the election victory of Violeta Chamorro two years ago, political conflict in Nicaragua ceased to be news in the United States. But while the struggles between *contras* and Sandinistas, and between their respective supporters in Washington, have faded from public memory, the history of those struggles has now begun to be written. Books already before us include Oliver North's memoir, *Under Fire,* and *Blood of Brothers* by the former New York *Times* correspondent in Nicaragua, Stephen Kinzer. Neither North nor Kinzer provides any substantial surprises. By contrast, Sam Dillon's flawed but important account of the Nicaraguan Resistance suggests that the eventual verdict of history may encompass significant reversals of judgments now widely accepted.

Dillon, a former reporter for the Miami *Herald,* demonstrates above all that the *contras* were not the band of mercenary thugs they were consistently portrayed as being in the U.S. media, but a genuine peasant movement. In a generally accurate manner, Dillon outlines the history of the main *contra* force, headquartered along Nicaragua's northern border and directed by Enrique Bermúdez and Adolfo Calero. His narrative, portraying personalities and campaigns as they developed on the ground, is the first to attempt such a detailed view of the Resistance and is likely to become a standard reference.

Dillon tells the story mainly through the persona of Luis Adán Fley, a Sandinista officer who defected to become a leading *contra* fighter under the *nom de guerre* of "Jhonson" (*sic*). Fley is presented as the conscience of the *contras,* struggling to correct human-rights abuses like the torture of suspected infiltrators. Dillon thoroughly details such incidents of corruption and cruelty, without mentioning that they have plagued irregular warfare in the Hispanic world and elsewhere from time immemorial; I will return to this point later. Throughout, however, concern with *contra* misdeeds is balanced by an insistence on the authenticity of the *contras'* origins. The movement, Dillon writes, was made up of

> small-business owners . . . [and] poor dirt farmers, who had fought with the Sandinistas against the National Guard [of the dictator Somoza]. Some were cattle traders or other rural merchants whose independent commerce the Sandinistas suppressed. Some were Protestant preachers who saw their frontier congregations harassed by zealous local revolutionary officials . . . few considered themselves to be "counterrevolutionaries."

This portrait of the first *contra* recruits who straggled over the Nicaraguan-Honduran border in 1981 sets the tone for the book. Near the end "Jhonson," arguing with a brother of his who had remained faithful to the Sandinistas, says about the *contras*:

> They're just peasants. Farmers who had no other choice but to go to war because of government abuses. You Sandinistas tried to impose a system that went against all our idiosyncrasies as Nicaraguans.

Just as Dillon perceives the *con-*

STEPHEN SCHWARTZ *is a staff writer for the* San Francisco Chronicle *and author of* A Strange Silence, *a book about the* contras *and the election of Violeta Chamorro (ICS Press).*

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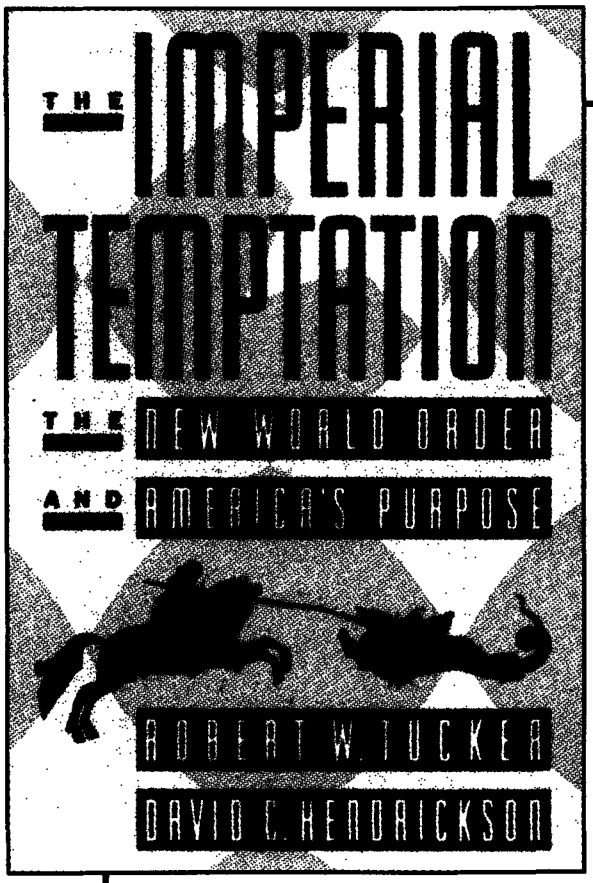

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tras as a movement enjoying great popular support among poor Nicaraguans—had they participated as an independent bloc in the 1990 election, he asserts, they would have taken a major share of the ballots—he is unsparing in his description of Sandinista repression. By late 1986, he notes, the Sandinistas had jailed more than 5,000 political suspects and forced nearly 200,000 people into 145 "settlements," a euphemism for internment camps. In the civil war, Sandinista military orders established free-fire zones in which all human beings were presumed *contras*, and killed as such. "Against those peasants considered to be rebel allies, the government wielded the stick: detention, resettlement, and bombardment."

DILLON is not alone in providing a new historical perspective on the *contras* and their antagonists. Support for such a perspective has recently come from another book, as yet published only in Spanish in Nicaragua. Titled *Una Tragedia Campesina: Testimonios de la Resistencia* ("A Peasant Tragedy: Testimonies of the Resistance"), it appeared in 1991 under the name of Alejandro Bendaña, the former head of the Sandinista foreign ministry and once a frequent visitor to pro-Sandinista circles in the U.S. The book, which is based on interviews conducted by no less a personage than Zoilamérica Ortega, the daughter of Sandinista president Daniel Ortega, has caused an uproar in Managua. Bendaña, who remains a Sandinista, contends unequivocally that while no government had ever promised the peasants of Nicaragua as much as the Sandinistas did, no government proved as inimical to the peasants' own interests. And he is similarly unequivocal about the indigenous sources of the *contra* resistance. "The *contra* army," he writes,

> grew beyond the expectations of [the Reagan administration] not as a result of sophisticated recruitment campaigns in the countryside but mainly because of the impact on the small-holding peasant [*parcelero*] of the policies, limits, and mistakes of the Sandinistas.

As Bendaña ironically notes, the *contras* represented the first peasant rebellion in Latin American history to gain the support of the U.S. government. This is a point that Dillon, for his part, would have done well to ponder. For by dwelling in lurid detail on human-rights problems, and by failing to set them in any proper historical context, he overlooks the unprecedented fact that here was a peasant army with a human-rights structure at work *within its ranks*. Nor does he seem to grasp what enabled "Jhonson" and his colleagues, who included a young woman named Marta Patricia Baltodano, to pursue their investigation of human-rights abuses: namely, the back-up provided by U.S. authorities involved in the *contra* effort.

Dillon argues, instead, that U.S. monitoring of the *contras* was lax and spotty, and was complicated by the determined desire of American officials to impose a command and organizational model more appropriate to the National Guard of Somoza than to a peasant army. Actually, the evidence assembled in this book points to a different conclusion: American errors were a consequence of ineptness and improvisation rather than of intellectual obtuseness or moral turpitude. Dillon's waffling here has enabled left-wing reviewers of *Comandos* to see in it what they wish to see. Thus, in the New York *Times Book Review* (September 29, 1991), Tina Rosenberg commented, "This book piles up the illusions Americans hold dear about the morality of United States foreign policy and sets them on fire." In fact, the only illusions that *should* have been destroyed by *Comandos* are those held by the likes of Miss Rosenberg, and it is to Dillon's discredit that in his otherwise fair portrayal of the *contras* he should have provided ammunition for those bent on seeing them above all as perpetrators of atrocities.

A TASTE for the lurid is not the only fault of Dillon's book. His style is prolix, repetitious, and excessively chatty. His narrative is strewn with far too many passages in which CIA (and State Department) officials, U.S. diplomats, and others are cited without identification, and far too many teasing references to "death squads" and other unelucidated criminal and terrorist activities. And he says nothing at all about the anti-Sandinista fighters on Nicaragua's southern border with Costa Rica; whatever one's opinion of them, the experience of these "other" *contras* deserves treatment in any history.

But the largest element omitted from Dillon's telling of the *contra* story is, as it were, himself. It was, after all, he and his fellow reporters who conspicuously failed to bring to the attention of the American public the truths he now so easily admits about the *contras* and the Sandinistas. Little of the core matter of this book is derived from published sources; why is that? Why, in other words, was the truth about the *contras* so thoroughly suppressed in the American media? Why were *contra* vices so exaggerated? Whatever the answer to these questions—it is not far to seek—the failure of Dillon and other journalists to report the whole truth assures that writing the history of the Sandinista-*contra* war will be no simple task. Despite its faults, *Comandos* provides a valuable starting point.

PC at TC

ED SCHOOL FOLLIES: THE MISEDUCATION OF AMERICA'S TEACHERS. By RITA KRAMER. *Free Press. 228 pp. $22.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH ADELSON

RITA KRAMER'S previous book, *At a Tender Age*, was a graphic and depressing report on the juvenile-justice system—in particular, on how it happens that so many predatory youngsters have been set loose by that system to terrorize the rest of us. Not so much blow by blow as legal motion by legal motion, she showed how the rhetoric of civil rights has been translated into absurd and destructive consequences. Now Mrs. Kramer has

JOSEPH ADELSON *is professor of psychology at the University of Michigan and the author of* Inventing Adolescence, *among other books.*

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turned her gifts to the field of education, centering upon the neglected topic of how our public-school teachers are trained. The topic has been neglected, I suspect, because those of us bent on reforming the public schools have had more pressing problems to cope with—like the lunacies of multiculturalism—or more significant issues to debate—like whether and how to implement parental choice. And perhaps many have assumed, as I did, that the graduate schools of education were carrying on as before, offering credentials by teaching dull courses in pedagogy to bored students.

Would that it were so. Alas, our ed schools have kept up with the times. Kramer visited fourteen of them—north, south, east, and west, private and public, large and small, some trend-setting, some more modest in purpose. She attended classes, met with students, teachers, and administrators both on and off campus, and altogether saw and heard enough to provide this remarkable ethnography, marked by even-handedness, lucid writing, and—given the cant she endured—an admirable degree of patience.

THERE are, of course, differences among the schools, and variations within them, but on the whole we find a dispiriting sameness. The first school Kramer visited, Columbia University's Teachers College (TC), tells most of the tale. Early on, she met a student, a Harvard graduate. Why, Mrs. Kramer asked her, did she choose TC over the prestigious education school at Harvard? The answer: because of the emphasis TC places on peace education. For it is evidently vital to teach American children—the same children, mind you, whom we know to be appallingly ignorant about geography, history, and much else—how to think about nuclear war, arms control, and the like; according to Mrs. Kramer's informant, you have to "like work it into all subjects," including English and social studies and biology. Another student told her that the topic should be introduced as early as possible, at two or three years of age.

There was worse to come. Kramer attended a graduate seminar on Education for Peace, Disarmament, and the Control of Nuclear Weapons; its participants seemed to share the belief that all war is evil, and to be unable to imagine a just or necessary war, including the one waged against the perpetrators of the Holocaust. Some held that war is a male pursuit, as is all violence, and one suggested that this might be owing to a "nonfemale" image of God. "If they had feminine figures of God, would they treat women that way, like rape them and everything?" One student, who happened to be Chinese, recited from a text which had American soldiers routinely killing Vietnamese women, crucifying them, raping them, eviscerating them. The veracity of the text was accepted by the class without question or comment, although Mrs. Kramer learned later that the student had been reading from North Vietnamese propaganda tracts dating from the 1960's.

There is at Teachers College a revered professor of social philosophy who is the most popular teacher at the school, and Mrs. Kramer reports at length on one of her lectures. She opened by offering for sale reprints of articles by Marx and Lenin, then launched into a familiar litany about the evils of American society: that it is "based on exploitation, imperialism, slavery," that it ignores the powerless, "women, the lame, the destitute, the disenfranchised, the slave." She professed hatred of the market and what comes with it—competition, success, efficiency, consumption. She railed at the idea of "objective standards" in performance.

Her students—150 of them—were enthralled, joining in to add their own condemnations of businessmen, of the idea that welfare programs should be linked to a work requirement, of the disinclination of some Americans to subsidize artists to do whatever they please, including sitting on a porch and playing the guitar. E.D. Hirsch, Allan Bloom, and Charles Murray were especially singled out for attack; Murray was said to favor the genocide of blacks.

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THE attitudes Mrs. Kramer heard voiced at Teachers College were repeated, if with less stridency, at most of the schools she visited. At Eastern Michigan University, she sat in as a class was shown how school textbooks secretly serve the interests of the privileged at the expense of the poor and the powerless. Taking the professor's lead, students chipped in with their own examples of this nefarious process: going to the doctor, one ventured, benefits licensed physicians at the expense of native healers and herbalists. The professor then lectured the class on *Tootle* (the train, in case you have forgotten) as a symbol of the helplessness of workers in a cruel meritocratic system. The idea of working hard, the professor instructed, "covers up a whole set of social, structural issues."

As it happens, many students at Eastern Michigan are older and come from blue-collar or lower-middle-class families. They are thus less likely than their peers at Teachers College to have been programmed by family background or undergraduate education to accept their professor's hackneyed view of reality. In the class observed by Mrs. Kramer, a number of them did, in fact, dig in their heels. One, Carol, complained, "You always throw meritocracy at us. What's the alternative?" Carol herself had chosen to work hard in order to improve herself and to give her children better things. That was my choice, she asserted. But she might as well have been talking to the wall. The professor simply ran through the catechism once again: schools do no more than reproduce "the class system," the poor cannot succeed in America.

Neither Carol nor her professor would yield, and so neither won the argument. But in the long run the Carols of this world would seem the likelier losers. It is the students at Teachers College and its counterparts who will occupy the high administrative posts, write the curriculum guides, choose the textbooks, and in general tell the Carols what to do and how to teach.

ONE effect of that leadership will be the further expansion in our secondary and elementary schools of what we already have in our colleges: a disparagement of the Western liberal tradition, in part by stressing its wickedness, in part by constructing a glorified picture of non-Western societies. We will also see the continued crowding-out of major figures in the arts, sciences, and government, to allow for the celebration of a whole assortment of lesser worthies.

This redirection, to be sure, will have a putatively worthy aim: the improvement of self-esteem among minorities, especially blacks, and a consequent rise in their academic achievement. Neither has happened yet, and, for reasons that have been spelled out more than once in these pages,* neither is likely to happen. Which brings me to a less visible but perhaps even more important effect of the doctrines taught at the education schools: their corrosive impact on the very values and practices which do produce academic achievement.

According to ed-school doctrine, our youngsters are somehow scarred by the emphasis we have traditionally placed on effort, merit, and success. Instead, as Mrs. Kramer writes in her concluding chapter, "The school is to be remade into a republic of feelings—as distinct from a republic of learning—where everyone can feel he deserves an A," and no one need be intimidated by the display of excellence. Under such a regime it is the able student in particular who will be the loser, as his or her talents receive neither the challenge nor the nourishment they require. In a brilliant analysis of the decline in SAT scores (*Public Interest*, Winter 1992), Charles Murray (yes, the mass murderer himself) and Richard Herrnstein show quite clearly what losses have already been incurred and at what great cost to us collectively. If the education schools do not deserve all of the blame for this state of affairs, it is not for want of trying.

* See, for instance, "Narcissus Goes to School," by Chester E. Finn, Jr. (June 1990) and "E Pluribus Nihil," by Midge Decter (September 1991).

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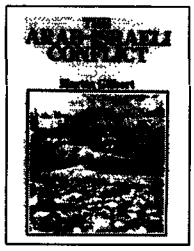

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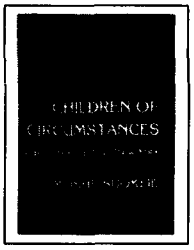

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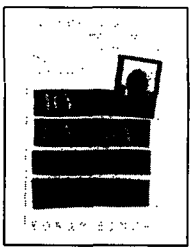

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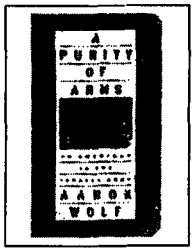

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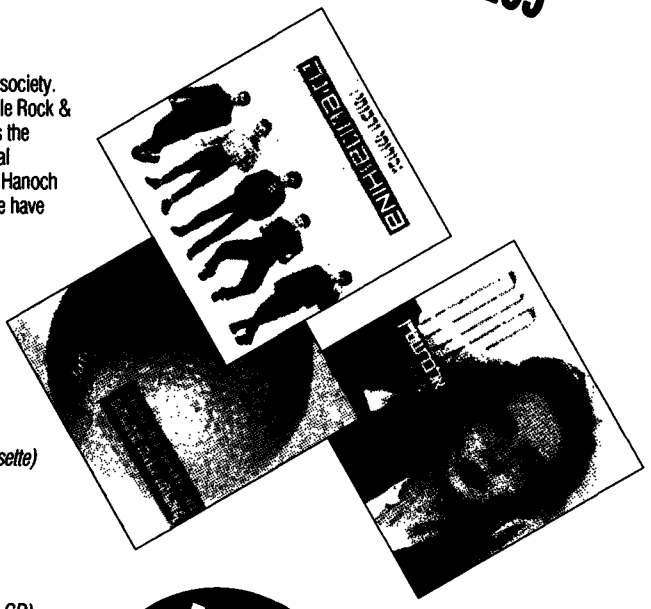

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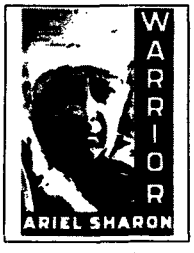

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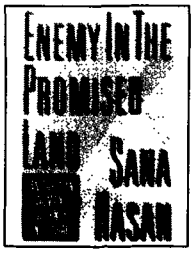

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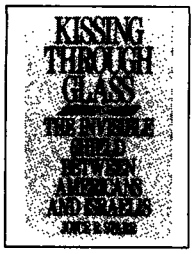

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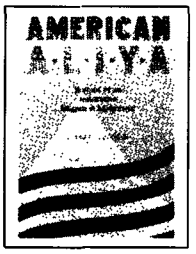

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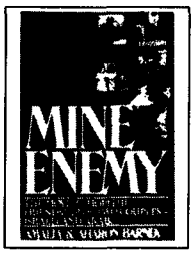

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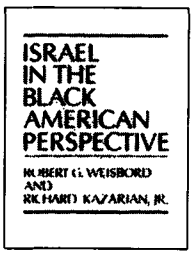

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